THE

ESSAYS

OF

Michael Seigneur de Montaigne,

Tranſlated into ENGLISH.

THE EIGHTH EDITION,

With very conſiderable

AMENDMENTS and IMPROVEMENTS,

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ESSAYS

OF

MICHAEL Seigneur de MONTAIGNE.

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

Of Profit and Honesty.

THERE is no man but at one time or other says a silly thing; but the worst of it is when he affects it.

Næ ille magno conatu magnas nugas dixerit *.

The Man in troth with much ado
Has prov'd that one and one make two.

This does not touch me. My nonsense slips from me with as little care as it merits, and it is well it does so. I would quit it on a sudden for the little there is in it of value, and neither buy nor sell it for more than the weight. I speak on paper as I do to the first man I meet; and that this is true, observe what follows.

A perfidious action detested by Tiberius.

Who would not abhor treachery when Tiberius would not admit of it in a matter of such importance to him †? He had

* Terence Heauton, act iii. scene 9. † Tacit. Annal. lib. ii. cap. 88.

word sent from Germany that if he thought fit, they would by poison rid him of Ariminius, who was the most powerful enemy the Romans had, he having treated them very basely in the time of Varus, and being the only man that opposed their dominion in those countries. The answer he returned was, that it was the custom of the Romans to be revenged on their enemies by open force, sword in hand; not clandestinely, nor by fraud: wherein he preferred the thing that was honourable, to the profitable. He was (you will say) a hector. I believe as much; but that is no great wonder in the gentlemen of his profession. But the acknowledgment of virtue is no less valid by its coming from the lips of him who hates it, forasmuch as truth forces it from him; and if he will not sincerely embrace it, he puts it on at least by way of ornament.

Human policy so full of imperfection that it needs vice to support it.

Our structure, both external and internal, is full of imperfection; yet there is nothing in nature but what is of use, not even inutility itself. There is nothing in this universe which has not some proper place in it. Our being is cemented with certain mean qualities; ambition, jealousy, envy, revenge, superstition, despair, have so natural a lodgment in us that the image of them is discerned in the brute beasts; nay cruelty itself, a vice so much out of nature, for even in the midst of compassion, we feel within us an unaccountable bitter-sweet titillation of ill-natured pleasure in seeing another suffer; and even children are sensible of it.

Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis
E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem ‖.

'Tis sweet from land to see a storm at sea,
And others sinking whilst ourselves are free.

Whoever would divest man of the seeds of such qualities would destroy the fundamental conditions of human life. Likewise in all governments there are necessary offices,

‖ Lucret. lib. ii. ver. 1, 2.

not

not only abject but vicious. Vices have their department there, and are employed as cement to connect us together like poison that is administered for the preservation of our health. If they become excusable, as being necessary for us, and because the public necessity disguises their real qualities, we are to resign this part to the strongest and boldest citizens, who sacrifice their honour and conscience, as the ancients sacrificed their lives, for the good of their country. We that are weaker play those parts that are more easy and less hazardous. The public weal requires that a man should betray, tell lies, and commit murder: let us leave this commission to men that are more obedient and more supple.

Malicious justice.

I have really been often vexed to see judges by fraud and false hopes of favour or pardon, draw in a criminal to confess his guilt; and to observe what recourse they therein have to tricking and impudence. It would be of good service to justice, and even to Plato himself, who countenances this manner of proceeding, to furnish me with other means more suitable to my inclination. It is a malicious kind of justice, and I think it is as much offended by itself as by others. I said not long since, in some company, that as I would be very sorry to betray any private man for the service of my prince, I would be very loth to betray my prince to any private man. As I have an aversion to cheat another, so I would hate to be deceived myself, and will not so much as furnish any pretext or occasion for it.

Montaigne a very tender conscienced negociator.

In the few concerns which I have had to negociate betwixt our princes, in those divisions and subdivision by which we are at this time rent, I have nicely avoided leading them into any mistakes of me, and their deceiving others by my mask. The people of this profession are the most reserved, and pretend to be the men of the greatest moderation, and the nearest comformity to the sentiments of those with whom they have to do. I speak sincerely what I think, and in my own manner; being a tender negociator, and but a learner, who had rather fail of success, than be wanting to myself. Yet it has hitherto proved so lucky (for surely it is chiefly owing

to fortune) that few things have paſſed from hand to hand with leſs ſuſpicion, and more favour and ſecrecy. I have an open manner, which readily inſinuates itſelf, and gains credit upon the firſt acquaintance. Simplicity, and the naked truth, in what age ſoever, make their way, and find their account; and moreover the freedom of men who treat without any intereſt of their own is neither hateful nor ſuſpected: and ſuch may very well make uſe of the anſwer of Hyparides to the Athenians, when they complained of his rough way of ſpeaking, "Gentlemen, do not regard whether I am free; but "whether I am ſo from ſincerity, and without any ad- "vantage from it to my own affairs ‖." My freedom of ſpeech has alſo naturally cleared me of all ſuſpicion of diſſimulation by its vehemency (leaving nothing unſaid, how pungent and cutting ſoever, ſo that I could not have ſaid worſe behind their backs) and by the full diſcovery it made of ſimplicity and indifference. I aim at no other advantage by my pleading than to plead, and tack no long arguments or propoſitions to it. Every plea plays its own part, hit or miſs. For the reſt, I am not ſwayed by any paſſion either of love or hatred to the great men, nor is my will influenced by the ſenſe of any particular injury or obligation. I honour our kings with an affection that is ſimply loyal and reſpectful, being neither prompted to, nor reſtrained from it, by private intereſt; and for this I value myſelf. Nor does the general and juſt cauſe attract me otherwiſe than with moderation and coolneſs. I am not bound by ſuch cogent and pentrating pre-contracts and engagements. Anger and hatred are not within the ſphere of juſtice, and are paſſions of no uſe but to thoſe who are not to be kept to their duty by mere reaſon, *Utatur motu animi, qui uti ratione non poteſt.* "He that cannot be guided "by reaſon is governed by paſſion." All lawful intentions are temperate in themſelves, if otherwiſe, they become ſeditious and unlawful. This is what makes me walk every where with my head erect, a frank countenance, and an open heart. It is a truth, and I fear not to

‖ Plutarch, in his Treatiſe of the Difference betwixt the Flatter and the Friend, chap. 24.

CON-

confess it, I could, were it necessary, hold a candle to St. Michael, and another to his serpent ‡, after the manner of the old woman. I will follow the right side even to the fire, but will keep out of it if possible. Let Montaigne be overwhelmed in the public ruin, if it must be so; but if it be not necessary, I would thank my stars for his safety, and I make use of all the length of line which my duty allows me for his preservation. Was it not Atticus, who being on the just but losing side, preserved himself by his moderation in that universal shipwreck of the world, among so many various changes and revolutions? For a private man as he was, this is more easy; and upon an occasion of the like nature I think men are very excusable for not being ambitious to meddle or make.

A neutrality in the distractions of one's country is not handsome nor honest.

For a man to be wavering and trimming, to keep his affection unmoved, and without inclination, in the disturbances of his country, and in a public division, I think it neither decent nor honest, *Ea non media, sed nulla via est, velut eventum expectantium, quò fortunæ consilia sua applicent.* "That is not taking the middle way, but really no way at all, like those who wait for "the even of things in order to take their resolution accordingly ‡." This may be allowed with respect to the feuds of our neighbours; and accordingly Gelo the tyrant of Syracuse suspended his resolution in the war of the Barbarians against the Grecians, keeping an embassy at Delphos with presents to observe to which side fortune would incline, and to take the critical minute to make the victors his friends §. But it would be a sort of treason to proceed after this manner in our own domestic affairs, wherein a man must necessarily be of one side or the other; though for a man to sit still, who has no office nor express command to urge him to action, I think it more excusable (and yet this is no excuse for myself) than to

‡ Montaigne means that he would be inclined to make his court to both the opposite parties, as the old woman did who offered one wax taper to St. Michael the archangel, and another to the dragon, which is represented fighting with St. Michael. This woman's action has given rise to a sort of proverb.

‡ Titus Livy, lib. xxxii. cap. 21. § Herodot. lib. vii. p. 498.

meddle in foreign broils, to which, however, according to our laws, no man is compelled. Yet even those who wholly engage themselves in such broils, may act with such temper and moderation that the storm shall fly over their heads without bursting on them. Had we not reason to expect as much from M. de Morvilliers, the late bishop of Orleans? And among those who behave valiantly at this time, I know some of so much candour and good-nature that they will continue steady, whatever may be the change or fate which heaven is preparing for us. I am of opinion, that it properly belongs to kings to quarrel with kings, and laugh at those bullies who out of mere wantonness push themselves into quarrels where the odds are so great. For a man has no particular quarrel with a prince, because he marches against him publickly and couragcously, for his own honour, and according to his duty. If he does not love such a personage, he does better, he esteems him. The cause of the laws, and the defence of the ancient government, are always remarkable for this, that such even as for their own private interest disturb the state, excuse if they do not honour its defenders.

Vices disguised under the name of virtues.

But we ought not, though it is our daily practice, to call a bitterness and roughness of temper which spring from private interest and passion, by the name of duty, nor a treacherous and malicious conduct, by the name of courage. They call their propensity to mischief and violence by the name of zeal. It is not the cause by which they are warmed but their interest. They kindle a war, not because it is just, but because it is war.

The moderation which ought to be observed betwixt those who are at variance.

Nothing hinders but men may behave commodiously and loyally too among those who are of the adverse party. Carry yourself, if not with an affection, always equal, (for it is capable of different degrees) at least moderate, such as may not so engage you to one party that it may challenge all that you are able to do; and content yourself also with a moderate degree of their favour, and to swim in the troubled water without attempting to fish in it.

Double dealers how far useful.

The other way of a man's offering himself to serve both parties is much more conscientious than prudent. Does not he to whom you betray another person with whom you was on good terms, know that you will do as much by him another time? He holds you for a villain, yet he hears what you have to say, draws intelligence from you, and works his own ends through your treachery; for double-dealing men are useful in what they bring, but care must be taken that they carry away as little as possible.

Montaigne's behaviour among those of a different party.

I say nothing to one party that I may not upon a fit occasion say to the other, with a little alteration of accent; and report nothing but things either indifferent or known, or what is of common consequence. I cannot allow myself for any consideration to tell them a lye. What is trusted with me as a secret, I religiously conceal; but I take as few trusts upon me of that nature as I can: the secrets of princes are a troublesome burden to those who are not interested in them. I am willing that they trust me with little, but that they rely with confidence upon what I tell them. I have always known more than I desired. One open way of speaking introduces another open way of speaking, and draws out discoveries like wine and love. In my opinion Philippides answered king Lysimachus very discretely, who asking him what share of his estate he should bestow upon him, "What "you will," said he, "provided it be none of your se- "crets †." I see that every one grumbles and is displeased if the bottom of such affairs as he is concerned in be concealed from him, or that there be any reservation used. For my part I am content to know no more of the matter than what it is intended I should be employed in, nor do I desire that my knowledge should exceed or constrain my promise. If I must serve for an instrument of deceit, let it be at least with a salvo to my conscience. I am not willing to be reputed a servant so affectionate or so loyal as to be thought a fit tool to betray any man. He that is faithless to himself may well be so to his sovereign. But

† Plutarch, of Curiosity, chap. iv.

princes do not accept of men by halves, and despise services that are limited and conditional. There is no remedy for it. I tell them frankly how far I can go and no farther; for a slave I would not be but with reason, and yet I could hardly submit to that condition. They also are to blame who exact from a free man the same subjection and obligation to their service as they do from him whom they have made and bought, or whose fortune depends particularly and expressly upon them. The laws have rid me of a great anxiety; they have chosen me a fortune, and given me a guardian. Every other superiority and obligation ought to be relative to that appointment, and to be curtailed. Not that if my affection should incline me otherwise, I would consent to it immediately. The will and the desire make a law for themselves, but actions are to receive theirs from public authority. All this procedure of mine is somewhat different from our common forms; it would not be productive of great effects, nor would it be of long duration. Innocence itself could not in this age either negociate without dissimulation, or traffick without lying: and indeed public employments do not at all suit my taste; what my profession requires I perform in the most private manner I can. While I was but young I was deeply engaged in business, and succeeded; but I retired from it in good time. I have since often avoided meddling in it, rarely accepted, and never asked it, turning my back to ambition; and if not like the watermen who advance forward while they look backward, yet I am not so much obliged to my resolution as to my good fortune that I was not embarked in it: for there are ways less displeasing to my taste, and more suitable to my ability, by which if she had heretofore called me to the public service, and my own advancement in the world's opinion, I know I would in spite of all my arguments have pursued them. Such as commonly say in opposition to what I profess, that what I call freedom, simplicity, and plainness in my manners, is art and finesse, and rather prudence than goodness, industry than nature, good sense than good luck, do me more honour than disgrace, but really they make

make my subtility too refined. Whoever has followed me close, and pried narrowly into me, I will give him up the point if he does not confess that there is no rule in their school that could answer to this natural motion, and maintain an appearance of liberty and licence so equal and inflexible through so many various and crooked paths, and that all their care and ingenuity could not have carried them through. The path of truth is but one and simple; but that of private advantage, and of the conveniency of the business which a man has upon his hands, is double, uneven and casual. I have often seen these counterfeit and artificial liberties taken, but for the most part without success. They are apt to relish of the ass in Æsop's Fables, which, in emulation of the dog, fawningly clapped his two fore-feet upon his master's shoulders, for which his master gave him twice the number of blows with a cudgel, as the dog had caresses for the like sort of complaisance. *Id maximè quemque decet, quod est cujusque suum maximè* *. "That is most becoming to every man, "which is most natural to him." I am not willing to deprive deceit of its due rank; that would be mistaking the world. There are vices which are lawful, as there are many actions either good or excusable, that are in a strict sense illegal.

Universal justice much more perfect than particular and national justice.

The justice which in itself is natural and universal, is otherwise, and more nobly regulated than that other particular and national justice, which is restrained to the necessity of our state affairs. *Veri juris germanæque justitiæ solidam et expressam effigiem nullam tenemus: umbrâ et imaginibus utimur* ‡. "We retain no solid and express "model of true law and perfect justice; we have only a "shadow and faint sketch of it;" insomuch that the § sage Dandamys hearing the lives of Socrates, Pythagoras, and Diogenes, read, esteemed them to be great personages in every other respect but in their too great sub-

* Cicero de Offic. lib. i. cap. 31. ‡ Cicero de Offic. lib. iii. cap. 17.
§ He was an Indian sage who lived in the time of Alexander. What Montaigne here says of him is reported by Plutarch, who calls him Dandamis, in the Life of Alexander, chap. 20. It is the same in Strabo, lib. xv. where this Indian philosopher is called Mandanis. I have taken all this from M. de la Monnoye.

jection to the reverence of the laws, for the authority and support of which true virtue must abate very much of its original vigour; and many vicious actions are introduced, not only by their permission, but also by their persuasion. *Ex senatus-consultis plebisque scitis scelera exercentur* §. "The commission of certain crimes is authorised by the decrees of the senate and the common people." I follow the common phrase, which makes a distinction betwixt things profitable and honest, so as to call some natural actions which are not only useful but necessary, dishonest and obscene.

Useful treachery preferred to honesty.

But let us proceed in our instances of treachery. Two pretenders to the kingdom of Thrace fell into a dispute about their title The emperor hindered them from taking arms; but one of them under colour of bringing matters to an amicable issue by an interview, having invited his competitor to an entertainment at his house, caused him to be secured, and put to death ‡. Justice required that the Romans should have satisfaction for this offence, but there was a difficulty in obtaining it by the common forms. What therefore they could not do lawfully, without a war, and without danger, they attempted by treachery, and what they could not do honestly they accomplished profitably. For this end one Pomponius Flaccus was pitched upon as a fit instrument ‖. This man, by dissembled words and assurances, having drawn the other into his toil, instead of the honour and favour which he had promised, sent him bound hand and foot to Rome. Here one traitor betrayed another, contrary to the common custom; for they are full of mistrust, and it is not easy to over-reach them in their own art; witness the sad experience we have lately had of this.

Treachery, how fatal to the man who abandons himself to it.

Let who will be Pomponius Flaccus, and there are enough that would; for my part, both my word and my faith are like all the rest, parts of this common body: the best they can do is to serve the public, and this I take to be presupposed, But as, should one command me to take charge of the palace and the records, or to

§ Senec. Ep. 95. ‡ Tacit. Annal. lib. ii. cap. 65. ‖ Id. ibid. cap. 67.

enter

enter upon the office of conductor of pioneers, I would say, that as to the former, it is what I do not understand, and as to the latter, that I am called to a more honourable employment: so likewise, should any one want me to lie, betray, and forswear myself, for some notable service, much more to assassinate or poison, I would say, if I have robbed or stolen from any one, send me forthwith to the galleys. For it is justifiable for a man of honour to say, as the Lacedæmonians did, when they were just on the point of concluding their agreement after their defeat by Antipater, "You may impose as heavy "and ruinous burdens upon us as you please, but if you "command us to do things that are shameful and dis-"honest, you will only lose your time †." Every one, to be sure, had taken the same oath to himself that the kings of Egypt made their judges swear solemnly; viz. that they would not decree any thing contrary to their consciences, though they themselves should command it §. In such commissions there is an evident mark of ignominy and condemnation: and whoever gives you such a commission does in fact accuse you; and he gives it you, if you understand it right, for a burden and a punishment. As much as the public affairs are amended by what you do, your own are impaired by it; and the better you behave for the public you act so much the worse for yourself. Nor will it be a new thing, nor perhaps without some colour of justice, if the same person ruin you who set you at work.

Treachery, in what case excuseable.

If treachery ought to be excused in any case, it is only so when employed in chastising and betraying the traitor. There are examples enough of treachery, not only where it was refused, but punished by those in whose favour it had been undertaken. Who knows not the sentence of Fabricius against Pyrrhus's physician?

Instances of treachery punished by those who gave orders for it.

But we find this also recorded, that a man has given command for an action which he afterwards severely revenged on the person whom he employed in it, re-

† Plutarch, in his Differences of the Flatterer and the Friend, chap. 21.

§ Plutarch, in the remarkable sayings of the ancient kings, &c. towards the beginning.

jecting

jecting a credit and power so uncontrolled, and disavowing a servitude and obedience so sordid and abandoned. Jaropelc duke of Russia tampered with a gentleman of Hungary to betray Boleslaus king of Poland by putting him to death, or giving the Russians an opportunity to do him some notable injury. The gentleman acted very craftily in the affair; he devoted himself more than ever to the service of the king, obtained to be of his council, and one of his chief confidents. With these advantages, and chusing the critical opportunity of his sovereign's absence, he betrayed to the Russians the great and rich city of Wisliez, which was entirely plundered and burnt, with the total slaughter, not only of its inhabitants, without distinction of sex or age, but of a great number of the neighbouring gentry whom he had convened there for his purpose. Jaropelc being glutted with his revenge, and his wrath being appeased, for which however he had some pretence (for Boleslaus had very much provoked him, by a behaviour too of the like kind) and being gorged with the fruit of this treachery, taking into consideration the deformity of the act in a naked abstracted light, and looking upon it with a calm dispassionate view, conceived such a remorse and disgust, that he caused the eyes of his agent to be plucked out, and his tongue and privy parts to be cut off.

How Antigonus punished the soldiers of Eumenes, whom they had delivered up to him.

Antigonus persuaded the soldiers called Argyraspides to betray his adversary Eumenes their general into his hands. But after putting him to death, he himself desired to be the commissioner of the divine justice for the punishment of so detestable a crime, and consigned the traitors over to the governor of the province, with express command by all means to destroy and bring them to an evil end §. So that of that great number of men not one ever returned to Macedonia. The better he had been served by them the more wicked he judged the service to be, and the more deserving of punishment.

§ Plutarch, in his Life of Eumenes, chap. 9, to the end.

The

The slave who betrayed his master P. Sulpicius, by discovering the place where he lay concealed, was, according to promise, manumitted from Sylla's proscription, but by virtue of his edict, though he was no longer a slave, he was instantly thrown headlong from the Tarpeian rock ‖.

A slave both rewarded and punished by Sylla for betraying his master.

And our king Clovis instead of armour of gold, which he had promised them, caused three of Canacro's servants to be hanged after they had betrayed their master to him, though he had set them upon it. They were hanged with the purse of their reward about their necks. After they had satisfied their second and special engagement they satisfy the general and first.

Another example of the like justice by king Clovis.

Mahomet the Second being resolved to rid himself of his brother out of a jealousy of his power, as is the custom of the Ottoman race, employed one of his officers in the execution, who choaked him by pouring water into his throat. When this was done, Mahomet, to make atonement for the murder, delivered the man who committed it into the hands of the deceased's mother (for they were only brothers by the father's side) who in his presence ript open the murderer's bosom, and in a fury ran her hands into his breast, and rifled it for his heart, which she tore out, and threw to the dogs. Even to the vilest of people it is a pleasure, when their end has been served by a criminal action, to patch it up with some mixture of goodness and justice, as by way of compensation and check of conscience. To which may be added, that they look upon the instruments of such horrid crimes, as upon persons that reproach them therewith, and aim by their deaths to cancel the memory and testimony of such practices.

Mahomet II. caused his brother to be murdered, and delivers over the person whom he employed to dispatch him, to be punished.

Now if perhaps you are rewarded, in order not to frustrate the public necessity of this extreme and desperate remedy, he who bestows the reward will notwith-

Traitors held accursed by those even who reward them.

‖ Valer. Max. lib. vi. cap. 5. in Romanis § 7.

standing

ſtanding, if he be not ſuch a one himſelf, look upon you as a curſed and execrable fellow; and concludes you to be a greater traitor than he does whom you betray; for he feels the malignity of your courage by your own hands, being employed without reluctance and without objection. He employs you like the moſt abandoned miſcreants in the office of hangman, an office as uſeful as it is diſhonourable. Beſides the baſeneſs of ſuch commiſſioners, there is moreover a proſtitution of conſcience. Sejanus's daughter being a virgin, and as ſuch not liable to be put to death, according to the form of law at Rome, was firſt raviſhed by the hangman, and then ſtrangled ‡. Thus not only his hand but his ſoul is a ſlave to the public convenience.

What Montaigne thinks of thoſe who conſent to be the executioners of their own kindred.

When Amurath the Firſt, more ſeverely to puniſh his ſubjects for having ſupported the parricide rebellion of his ſon, ordered that the neareſt of kin to them ſhould lend a hand in their execution, I think it was very honourable in any of them who choſe rather to be unjuſtly deemed culpable for another's parricide, than to be obedient to the demand of juſtice for a parricide of their own. And whereas, at the taking of ſome little forts, I have ſeen raſcals, who, to ſave their own lives, have been glad to hang their friends and companions, I have thought them in a worſe condition than thoſe that were hanged. It is ſaid that Witholde, a prince of Lithuania, introduced a practice, that a criminal who was condemned to die ſhould diſpatch himſelf with his own hand, for he thought it ſtrange that a third perſon, who was innocent of the crime, ſhould be charged with, and employed in, homicide.

In what caſe a prince is excuſable for a breach of his word.

When ſome urgent circumſtance, and ſome impetuous and unforeſeen accident, that very much concerns his government, compels a prince to evade his engagement, or throws him out of his ordinary duty, he ought to aſcribe this neceſſity to a ſcourge of the divine rod. Vice it is not, for he has given up his own reaſon to a

‡ Tacit. Annal. lib. v. cap. 9.

more

more universal and powerful reason; but certainly it is a misfortune: so that if any one should ask me what remedy? "None," would I say, "if he was really racked "betwixt these two extremes," (*sed videat ne quæratur latebra perjurio* ‡; "but let him take care that he does "not seek a pretence to cover his perjury") "he could "not do otherwise;" but if he did it without regret, it is a sign his conscience was seared. If there be a person to be found of so tender a conscience as to think so important a remedy too good for any cure whatsoever, I shall not like him at all the worse for it. He could not destroy himself more excusably and decently. We cannot do all we would, so that we are often obliged to commit the protection of our vessels to the conduct of heaven as to a sheet-anchor. To what more just necessity does he reserve himself? What is less possible for him to do than what he cannot do but at the expence of his faith and his honour? Things which perhaps ought to be dearer to him than his own safety, and the safety of his people. Though he should with folded arms call only upon God for his assistance, will he not have reason to hope that the divine goodness will not refuse the favour of his extraordinary arm to a hand that is so pure and just? These are dangerous instances, rare and weak exceptions to our natural rules, to which there is a necessity of submitting, but with great moderation and circumspection. No private utility is of such importance as to deserve this effort of our conscience, though the public good well deserves it when it is very apparent and very important.

On what condition the senate of Corinth justified Timoleon when he killed his own brother.

Timoleon made a proper atonement for his unnatural action by the tears he shed when he recollected that he had killed the tyrant with the hand of a brother: and it stung his conscience that he had been necessitated to purchase the public utility at so great a price as the wounding of his own integrity. Even the senate, which was by his means delivered from slavery, durst not determine positively on an action so considerable, which carried two aspects so important, and so contrary to each other. But the Syracusans, hav-

‡ Cicer. Offic. lib. iii. cap. 29.

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ing opportunely at that very time, sent to the Corinthians to solicit their protection, and to require of them a general fit to re-establish their city in its former dignity, and to clear Sicily of several petty tyrants, by whom it was oppressed, the senate deputed Timoleon for that service, with this artful declaration, "That if he behaved well in the government of the Syracusans, they "would from that time pronounce by their decree that "he had killed a tyrant, and on the contrary if he discovered an avaricious conduct they would try and "condemn him for fratricide, as having killed his own "brother ‖." This whimsical conclusion carries along with it some excuse, by reason of the danger of the example, and the importance of so double-faced an action. And they did well to discharge their own judgment of it, or to support it by considerations of a conditional nature. Timoleon's deportment in his voyage rendered his cause still more clear, so worthily and virtuously did he demean himself in all respects. And the good fortune which attended him in the difficulties he had to overcome in this noble task, seemed to be put in his way by the Gods, as favourably combining for his justification. If any man's aim is excusable, this man's is.

The senate of Rome inexcusable for having broke a treaty of its own making.

But the profit by the increase of the public revenue which served the Roman senate for a pretence to the base conclusion I am going to relate is not sufficient to warrant such injustice. Certain citizens had by the order and consent of the senate redeemed themselves and their liberty by money, out of the hands of L. Sylla*. The affair coming again upon the carpet, the senate condemned them to be taxable as they were before, and that the money they had disbursed for their redemption should never be repaid them. Civil wars often produce such vile examples, that we punish private men for having taken our words when we were in power; and one and the same magistrate makes another man pay the penalty of his change, though no fault of his. The schoolmaster lashes his

‖ Diodorus of Sicily, lib. xvi. chap. 19. of Amyot's translation.
* Cic. de Offic. lib. iii. chap. 22.

scholar

scholar for his docility, and the guide beats the blind man whom he leads by the hand. A shocking picture of justice!

Whether faith that is pledged ought ever to give way to private advantage.

There are some rules in philosophy that are both false and pusillanimous. The example that is proposed to us for preferring private benefit before the obligation due to faith once given, has not weight enough for the circumstance which they mix with it. Robbers have surprised you, and, after having made you swear to pay them a sum of money, give you your liberty. It is wrong to say that an honest man may be quit of his oath without payment, after he is out of their clutches. The case is quit otherwise. What fear has once prevailed on me to intend, I am obliged to keep the same purpose when I am no longer in fear. And though fear only forced my tongue, and not my will, yet am I bound to stand my word. For my own part, when my tongue has sometimes rashly out-run my thought, I have however made a conscience of disowning it; were we to act otherwise we would abolish all the right another claims to our promises. *Quasi vero forti viro vis possit adhiberi* *. "As "if violence could possibly operate upon a great heart."

In what case a private man is authorised to break his promise.

The only condition in which private interest can excuse us for the non-performance of a promise is, when we have promised a thing that is wicked, and in itself unjust. For the claim of virtue ought to supersede the force of any obligation of ours.

How very delicate Epaminondas was in the article of justice.

I have formerly placed Epaminondas in the first class of excellent men, and do not retract it. To what a pitch did he carry his regard for his private obligation, who never killed a man that he had overcome, who for the inestimable benefit of restoring the liberty of his country, made conscience of killing a tyrant or his accomplices, without the forms of justice; and who judged him to be a wicked man, was he ever so good a subject, who amongst his enemies, and in battle, spared not his friend and his host! His was a soul of a rich composition! He matched good nature and humanity, even the

* Cicer. de Offic. lib. iii. cap. 30.

most delicate in the school of philosophy, with the rudest and most violent of all human actions. Was it nature or art that softened a man of his great courage, high spirit, and obstinate constancy, against pain, death, and poverty, to such an extreme degree of good nature and complaisance? Dreadful, with fire and sword, he over-ran and subdued a nation invincible by all others, but himself; and yet, in the midst of such an expedition, he relaxed when he met his host and his friend. Verily he was fit to command in war, who could suffer himself to be checked with the curb of good nature, in the greatest heat of action, so inflamed and foaming with rage and slaughter. It shews an extraordinary greatness of mind to mix any idea of justice with such actions; but it was only possible for such steddiness of mind, as was that of Epaminondas, therein to mix good nature and the facility of the gentlest manners and purest innocence. Whereas one † told the Mammertines that statutes were of no force against men in arms; another ‡ told the tribune of the people, that there was a time for justice, and a time for war; a third, § that the noise of arms drowned the voice of the law; this man's ears were always open to hear the calls of civility and courtesy. Did he not borrow from his enemies ‖ the custom of sacrificing to the Muses, when he went to the field of battle, that they might, by their sweetness and gaiety of temper, soften his severity and martial fury? After the example of so great a master, let us not make any sort of doubt that there is something unlawful, even against an enemy; that the common cause ought not to require all things of a man against private interest: *Manente memoria etiam in dissidio publicorum fœderum privati juris.* "The "remembrance of private right subsisting even in the "midst of public quarrels."

et nulla potentia vires
Præstandi, ne quid peccet amicus, habet ‡.

Nor is there any pow'r can authorise
The breach of sacred friendship's solemn ties.

† Pompey; see Plutarch's Life of him, ch. 3. ‡ Cæsar, in Plutarch, ch. 11. § Marius, in his Life by Plutarch, ch. 10. ‖ Lacedæmonians. ‡ Ovid de Ponto, lib. i. epist. 7. ver. 37.

and

and that an honest man is not at liberty to do every thing for the service of his king, or of the common cause, or of the laws. *Non enim patria præstat omnibus officiis—et ipsi conducit pios habere cives in parentes* *. "For the obligation to one's country does not supersede every other obligation; and it is of importance to itself to have subjects "that have a veneration for their parents." This is an instruction proper for the present time. We need not harden our courage with this steel armour: it is enough that our shoulders are inured to it; it is enough for us to dip our pens in ink, and not in blood. If it be magnanimity, and the effect of an uncommon and singular valour, to contemn friendship, private obligation, a promise, and kindred, for the public weal, and in obedience to the magistrate; it is really sufficient to excuse us from it, that this is a greatness of soul which could have no place in the magnanimity of Epaminondas.

I abhor the furious exhortations of this other ungovernable soul ‡.

Dum tela micant, non vos pietatis imago
Ulla, nec adversa conspecti fronte parentes
Commoveant, vultus gladio turbate verendos.

When swords are drawn, let no remains of love
To friend, or kindred, your compassion move;
Fear not to wound the venerable face
Ev'n of your father, if oppos'd in place.

Let us deprive those that are naturally mischievous, bloody, and treacherous, of this colour of reason; let us set aside this wild extravagant justice, and stick to institutions that are more humane. What great things may not be accomplished by time and example! In an action of the civil war of Cinna, one of Pompey's soldier having inadvertently killed his brother, who was of the contrary party, killed himself on the spot, as soon he §

* Cic. de Offic. lib. iii. cap. 23. ‡ Julius Cæsar, who, when in an open war against his country, with a design to subvert its liberty, cries out, "Dum tela micant," &c. Lucan. lib. vii. ver. 320, &c.

§ Tacit. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 51.

knew it, for mere ſhame and ſorrow. Some years afterwards, in another civil war of the ſame people, a ſoldier, who had killed his brother, demanded a reward for it from his officers ‖.

The utility of an action does not render it honourable.

The utility of an action is but a ſorry plea for the beauty and honour of it; and it is wrong to infer, that becauſe ſuch a thing is uſeful, it is therefore incumbent on every one to perform it; and not only a duty, but for his honour.

Omnia non pariter rerum ſunt omnibus apta §.

All things are not alike for all men fit.

Were we to chuſe the moſt neceſſary, and the moſt uſeful action of human ſociety, it would be marriage; yet the ſaints think celibacy the more honourable ſtate, excluding the moſt venerable order of men from it, as we ſet apart thoſe cattle for ſtallions, which are the leaſt in our eſtimation.

CHAP. II.

Of Repentance.

The world ſubject to continual changes.

OTHERS form man, I only declare what he is; and I repreſent a particular one, very indifferently formed, and whom, were I to model again, I would certainly make very different from what he is; but what is done cannot be recalled. Now, though the features of my picture vary, there is ſtill a likeneſs. The univerſe is but one perpetual motion, in which all things are inceſſantly wheeled about; the earth, the rocks of Caucaſus, and the pyramids of Egypt, both by the general motion, and a particular one of their own. Conſtancy itſelf is no other than a more languid motion. I cannot be ſure of my object: it is always diſturbed and ſtaggering by a natural giddineſs. I take it in this point as it is at the inſtant when I

‖ Tacit. Hiſt. lib. iii. cap. 51. § Propert. lib. iii. eleg. ix. ver. 7.

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consider it. I do not paint its being, I paint its passage; not a passage from one century to another, or, as the people say, from seven years to another seven; but from day to day, from minute to minute. I must accommodate my history to the time. I may soon change not only my fortune, but also my intention. It is a true copy of various and changeable accidents, and of imaginations that are wavering, and sometimes contrary. Whether it be that I am not then the man I was, or that I lay hold on the subjects with other circumstances and considerations, so it is that perhaps I may plainly contradict myself; but, as Demades said, I do not contradict the truth. Could my soul once take sure footing, I would not make an attempt, but would speak definitively and peremptorily; but it is always learning and making trial.

Why, and in what manner Montaigne undertakes to speak of himself in this book.

I propose a life mean, and without lustre. It is all one; all moral philosophy is as applicable to a vulgar and private life as to the most spendid. Every man carries the entire form of the human condition. Authors communicate themselves to the people by some special and extraordinary work. I, in the first place, by my universal being, as Michael de Montaigne, not as a grammarian, a poet, or a lawyer. If men complain that I speak too much of myself, I complain that they do not so much as think of themselves. But is it reasonable, that being so particular in my way of living, I should pretend to make myself known to the public? And is it also reasonable that I should introduce into the world, where workmanship and art have so much credit and authority, the crude and plain effects of nature, and of frail nature too? Is not writing books without learning like building a wall without stone or brick? The fancies of music are carried on by art, mine by chance. I have this at least, according to discipline, that never any man treated of a subject, whereof he was more the master, than I am of that which I have undertaken; and that in this I am the most knowing man alive. Secondly, that never did any man penetrate deeper into his subject, nor more distinctly scrutinize into its parts and conse-

quences, nor ever more exactly and more plainly arrived at the end which he propoſed to himſelf in his work. To finiſh it, I need only apply to it with the fidelity which I have therein diſplayed with the utmoſt ſincerity and purity. I ſpeak the truth, not as much as I would, but as much as I dare; and I dare a little the more as I grow older; for, methinks, cuſtom indulges my age with more liberty of prating, as well as of indiſcretion in talking of a man's ſelf. That cannot fall out here, which I often obſerve elſewhere, that the work and the artificer contradict each other. Has a man of ſo elegant a converſation written ſo ſilly a treatiſe? or are ſuch learned writings the product of a man of ſo mean converſation, whoſe diſcourſe is common, and who but ſeldom writes; that is to ſay, whoſe capacity is borrowed, and not his own? A man of learning is not learned in every thing; but the ſelf-ſufficient man is ſufficient in every thing, even in ignorance. Here my book and I go hand-in-hand in one even pace. In other caſes a work may be recommended and cenſured abſtractedly from the workman, but not in this. He that touches the one, touches the other. He that ſhall judge of it without knowing him, will injure himſelf more than me. He who does know him gives me all the ſatisfaction I deſire. I ſhall be more happy than I deſerve, if I can only obtain thus much from the public approbation as to make men of underſtanding ſenſible that I was capable of making learning turn to my benefit if I had it, and that I deſerved to have been aſſiſted by a better memory. Be pleaſed here to excuſe what I often ſay, that I ſeldom repent of any thing, and that my conſcience is ſatisfied with itſelf, not like the conſcience of an angel or a horſe, but that of a man, always adding this check, not a check of ceremony, but of true and genuine ſubmiſſion, that I ſpeak by way of inquiry, and for better information, referring myſelf for determination purely and ſimply to the common and authoriſed opinions. I do not teach, I only relate.

The ſorrow which attends vice.

There is no vice that is really ſuch which does not offend, and which a ſound judgment does not blame; for there is ſo manifeſt a deformity and inconvenience in it, that perhaps they

they are in the right who say, that it is chiefly produced from ignorance and stupidity; so hard is it to imagine that a man can know it without abhorring it. Malice* sucks in the greatest part of its own venom, and itself is therewith poisoned. Vice leaves a repentance in the mind, which, like an ulcer in the flesh, is always scratched till it bleeds; for reason effaces all other sorrows and griefs, but it begets this of repentance, which is the more grievous because it springs from within, as the internal cold and heat of agues and fevers is more intense and severe than what we feel from without. I not only hold those for vices (though not equally such) which both reason and nature condemn, but those also which have been made such in the opinion of men, however false and erroneous, if it is authorised by the laws and custom.

The satisfaction that is connected with a good conscience.

Nor is there any virtue the practice of which does not give joy to a well-disposed mind. There is really on inconceivable joy in a man's own breast upon his doing good, and a generous boldness that accompanies a good conscience. A soul that is daringly vicious may perhaps arm itself with security, but cannot supply itself with this complacency and satisfaction. It is no slight pleasure to a man to be preserved from the contagion of so corrupt an age, and to say to himself, whoever shall look into my soul will not find me guilty of any man's ruin or affliction, nor of revenge or envy, nor of the public violation of the laws, nor of innovation, nor disturbance, nor of the breach of a promise: and though the licentiousness of the age has not only tolerated, but taught it to every man; yet I have not seized the estate or purse of any French man whatsoever, but have lived only upon what is my own, both in war and in peace; nor have I set any man to work without paying him his hire. These are pleasing testimonies of a good conscience; and this natural gladness is a great benefit to us, and the only reward that never fails us.

* This thought is taken from Seneca's Ep. 81, where he mentions it as a common saying of his countryman Attalus.

According to Montaigne, every man ought to sit in judgment upon himself.

To found the recompence of virtuous actions on the approbation of others is laying it on a foundation too uncertain and embarrassed, especially in so corrupt and ignorant an age as the present, wherein the good opinion of the vulgar is a scandal. Upon whom do you rely for the discovery of what is commendable? God forbid that I should be an honest man according to the honourable definition which I daily see every one gives of it, *Quæ fuerunt vitia, mores sunt* *. "The things that "were formerly reckoned vices are the manners of the "present age." Certain friends of mine have at times reprimanded me very frankly of their own accord, or, at my instigation, thereby performing an office which, to a mind that is rightly formed, surpasses all the offices of friendship, not only in utility but in kindness. I have always received them with the most open arms of courtesy and gratitude. But to speak conscientiously, I have often discovered, both in their reproaches and their praises, so much false measure, that I had not done much amiss, rather to have acted wrong than right, according to their standard. We, especially who lead a private life, not exposed to any other view than our own, ought to have a tribunal established in our breasts, whereby to try our actions; and, according to that, sometimes to caress, and at other times to correct ourselves. I have my laws and my court of justice to judge myself by, and apply myself to those more than to any other rules. I do indeed restrain my actions by those of other men, but do not extend them by any other rule except my own. It is only known to yourself whether you are cowardly and cruel, or loyal and devout. Others see you not, and only form uncertain conjectures of you. They do not perceive your nature so plainly as your art; rely not therefore upon their verdict, but stick to your own: *Tuo tibi judicio est utendum—Virtutis et vitiorum grave ipsius conscientiæ pondus est; quæ sublatæ jacent omnia* †. "Make use of your judgment—conscience plainly shews "the weight of virtues and vices;" take away that, all falls to the ground. But the saying, that repentance

* Senec. Ep. 39, at the end. † Cic. de Natura Deorum, lib. iii. cap. 35.

fol-

follows close at the heels of sin, seems not to have regard to sin in its richest attire, which is lodged in us as in its own proper habitation. It is possible to disavow and retract the vices that surprise us, and towards which our passions hurry us; but those which by a long habit are rooted and anchored in a strong and vigorous will, are not liable to be gainsayed. Repentance is no other than a recanting of our will, and an opposition to our fancies, that follows us close which way soever we take. It makes another person disown his former virtue and continency.

* *Quæ mens est hodie cur eadem non puero fuit?*
Vel cur his animis incolumes non redeunt genæ †*?*

Ah! whilst I was a vig'rous boy
Why did I not this mind enjoy?
Or why does not my rosy hue
Return to paint my cheeks anew?

The excellency of a private life which is regular.

That is an exquisite life wherein a due regularity is maintained within doors. Every one may play a part in the puppet-shew, and represent an honest man upon the stage; but within his own breast, where he may do what he list, and where nobody sees us; for a man to be regular there, that is the point. The next degree is for a man to be so at his own house in his ordinary actions, for which we are accountable to nobody, and wherein there is no study, no artifice; and therefore Bias, representing the excellent state of a family, says, the master of it was the same within doors, when by himself, as he was abroad, when governed by a regard to the laws, and the report of men ‖. And it was a worthy saying of ‡ Julius Drusus to the builders, when they

* Horace here characterise Ligurinus, who repented when he came to be an old man that he had not made an ill use of his beauty while he had it. † Hor. lib. iv. ode 10. ver. 7, 8. ‖ Plutarch, in the Banquet of the wise Men, ch. 23. ‡ Or rather Marcus Livius Drusus, the famous tribune of the people, who died anno 662, at Rome, after having, by his ambition, fomented a dangerous war in Italy, of which Florus treats, lib. iii. cap. 17 and 18. As to what Montaigne says here of Livius Drusus, he took it from a treatise of Plutarch, intitled, *Instructions to those who manage*

they offered for 3000 crowns to raise his house so high that his neighbours should not overlook him so much as before,—I will give you, says he ‡, 6000 to make it so that it may be looked into on all sides. It is mentioned to the honour of Agesilaus, that when he travelled he used to take up his quarters in the temples, to the end that the people, and the Gods themselves, might be spectators of his private actions. Such a one has been the miracle of the world, in whom neither his wife nor servant have never seen any one thing remarkable*. Few men have been admired by their domestics. We find in history, that a prophet hath no honour, not only in his own family, but in his own country. It is the same in lesser things: and in this mean example the image of greater is to be seen. In my country of Gascoigne they look upon it as a drollery to see me in print. The farther off I am read from my own home the more I am esteemed. I am fain to purchase printers in Guienne, elsewhere they purchase me. Upon this foundation they go who conceal themselves living and present, to obtain a name when they are absent and dead. I had rather have less of it: and do not publish myself to the world for more than my share of it; when I leave it, I quit all farther claim. The people reconduct such a one by a public act with amazement to his very door. He puts off this pageantry with his robe, and falls so much the lower from it by how much the higher he was exalted. In his house there is nothing but tumult and disorder; and was there a regularity in it, it would require a quick and well tried judgment to perceive it in these low and private actions: to which may be added, that order is a dull melancholy virtue. To enter a

No man a prophet in his own country.

manage the Affairs of State, ch. 4. where this Drusus is called Julius Drusus, a tribune of the people. If Montaigne had consulted Paterculus on this article he might have perceived this small mistake of Plutarch.

‡ It is Plutarch that makes him speak thus; but, according to Paterculus, Drusus being about to build a house, and having an offer made him by the architect to contrive it after such a model that none of his neighbours might look into it, Drusus said, "if you know how, make me such a house rather that what I do in it may be seen by every body."

* A man must be a hero indeed, said marshal Catinat, if his footman thinks it.

breach,

breach, to conduct an embassy, to govern a people, are actions of renown; to reprove, laugh, sell, pay, love, hate, and converse pleasantly and rationally with a man's own family, and with himself, not to relax nor to recant, are things more rare, more difficult, and less remarkable. By this means, they who lead a retired life do, whatever is said to the contrary, undergo offices of greater difficulty and extent than others. And private men, says Aristotle, serve virtue with more difficulty and eminence than they who are in the magistracy. We prepare ourselves for eminent occasions, more out of vanity than conscience. The shortest way to arrive at glory would be to do that for conscience which we do for glory. The virtue of Alexander appears to me with far less vigour in his theatre than that of Socrates in his mean and obscure employment. I can easily conceive Socrates in the place of Alexander, but Alexander in that of Socrates I cannot. Ask the one what he can do, he will answer, "conquer the world;" ask the other the same question, he will say, "conduct human life con- "formably to its natural condition;" a science much more general, weighty, and more lawful.

Wherein consists magnanimity.

The soul is to be valued not for its high flight, but for its regularity. Its greatness is not exercised in grandeur but mediocrity. As they who judge and try us internally, make no great account of the lustre of our public actions, and see that they are only threads and rays of clear water springing from a slimy and muddy bottom; so likewise they who judge of us by this fine outward appearance make the same conclusion from our internal constitution, and cannot couple faculties that are common and like their own, with those other faculties that astonish them, and are so far out of their sight. Therefore it is that we give savage forms to dæmons; and who does not give Tamerlane large eye-brows, wide nostrils, a dreadful face, and a stature beyond measure, according to the conception he has formed from the report of his name? Had any one heretofore shewed me Erasmus, I would hardly have believed but that every thing he spoke to his

his man or his landlady was adage and apophthegm. We have a more suitable idea of an artificer upon his close-stool, or upon his wife, than of a great president venerable for his carriage and abilities. We fancy that they do not stoop so low from their high tribunals as to live. As vicious souls are often incited to do well by some strange impulse, so are virtuous souls to do ill. They are therefore to be judged by their settled state, when they are composed, if they ever are so; or at least when they are nearer to repose, and in their natural situation.

Natural inclinations fortified by education, but not changed and extirpated.

Natural inclinations are assisted and fortified by education, but are scarce ever altered or subdued by it. A thousand souls in my time have shifted towards virtue or vice in spite of a contrary discipline.

Sic ubi desuetæ sylvis in carcere clausæ
Mansuevere feræ, et vultus posuere minaces,
Atque hominem didicere pati, si torrida parvus
Venit in ora cruor, redeunt rabiesque furorque,
Admonitæque tament gustato sanguine fauces,
Fervet, et a trepido vix abstinet ira magistro *.

So beasts of prey, imprison'd in a cage,
Grow tame, abandoning their native rage
And threat'ning looks, and do themselves inure
The government of mankind to indure.
But if again a little blood they taste,
Their savage fury seizes them in haste;
They thirst for more, grow fierce, and wildly stare,
As if their trembling keepers they would tear.

Thus men palliate and conceal their original qualities, but do not extirpate them. The Latin tongue is as it were natural to me; I understand it better than the French, but I have not used to speak it, nor hardly to write it these forty years; and yet, upon some sudden agitations, which I have fallen into twice or thrice in my life (and once upon seeing my father, in perfect health, fall upon me in a fainting fit). I always vented my first outcries in Latin; nature starting and forcibly

* Lucan. lib. iv. ver. 237.

expressing

expreſſing itſelf notwithſtanding ſo long a diſcontinuance; and of this there are many other inſtances.

The reformations of mankind only relate to externals.

They who in my time have taken a review of the manners of the age do, by novel opinions, reform ſeeming vices; but as for real vices they leave them as they were, if they do not augment them; the latter of which, it is to be feared, is the caſe. We chooſe to diſregard all other good actions on account of theſe external reformations of leſs coſt and greater merit, and thereby make a cheap atonement for the other natural conſubſtantial and internal vices. Look back a little on our own experience. There is no man, if he be attentive, who does not find in himſelf a particular and governing method of his own, which ſtruggles with inſtruction, and with the tempeſt of paſſions that are contrary to it. For my part, I ſeldom feel myſelf agitated by any ſhock. I find myſelf, as it were, always in my place like heavy unweildy bodies. If I am not at home I am always near it. My debauches do not carry me very far off. There is nothing ſtrange nor extreme in the caſe, and yet I have healthy and vigorous raptures.

The repentance of men commonly very corrupt.

The true condemnation, and that which affects men's common practice, is that their ſtate of retirement is full of filth and corruption, the idea of their reformation blurred, their repentance weak, and as much to blame almoſt as their ſin. Some either for having been linked to vice, by a natural propenſity, or by a long habit, cannot ſee any deformity in it. Others (of which claſs I am) do indeed weigh vice, but they put pleaſure, or ſome other motive, in the other ballance, and ſuffer and yield to it for a certain price, but viciouſly and baſely; yet there might perhaps be imagined ſo vaſt a diſproportion of meaſure, wherein with juſtice, the pleaſure would excuſe the ſin, as we ſay of profit, not only if it were accidental, and out of ſin, as larceny, but in the very exerciſe of ſin as in the enjoyment of a woman, wherein the temptation is violent, and it is ſaid, ſometimes to be invincible. Being the other day in Armagnac, at a ſeat which belongs to a kinſman of mine, I ſaw a country fellow, that was by

by every one called the Robber, who gave this narrative of his life; that being born a beggar, and finding that he would never be able to get enough by his labour to support himself against want, he resolved to turn robber; and, being a strong man, had followed the trade all the time of his youth with safety; for he gathered in his corn and wine from other men's lands, but at a great distance, and in such great loads, that it was not to be imagined how one man could carry off so much upon his shoulders in one night as he did; and moreover, he was so careful not to do one man more damage than another, that every particular man's loss therefore was of the less importance. He is now grown old and rich for a man of his rank, thanks to the trade he drove, which he makes no scruple to confess to every body; and to make his peace with God for his ill-got wealth, he says, that he is daily ready, by his bounty, to make satisfaction to the successors of those he robbed; and if he does not to every one (which it is impossible for him to do at once) he will leave it in charge to his heirs to perform the rest proportionably to the wrong he has done to every one, which is what he himself only knows. By this account, whether true or false, this man looks upon robbery as a dishonest action, and he hates it, but not so much as poverty. He barely repents of it, but forasmuch as it was in this manner counterballanced and compensated, he repents not of it. This is not that habit which incorporates us with vice, and conforms our very understanding to it; nor is it that impetuous wind, which, by its gusts, disturbs and blinds our faculties, and for the time hurries us, judgment and all, into the power of vice.

Montaigne's judgment was the common guide of his actions.

It is my way to do what I do thoroughly, and all of a-piece. I scarce make a motion clandestinely and by stealth from my reason, and that is not conducted in a manner by the consent of all my faculties without division, or without any inward struggles. My judgment has all the blame or all praise of it; and the blame it once has, it has always; for I have had, almost from my infancy, the same inclination, the same turn, and

the ſame ſpirit: and as to univerſal opinions, I fixed myſelf from my childhood in the ſame place where I was to ſtick. There are ſome ſins that are impetuous, prompt, and ſudden; let us ſet them aſide; but as for thoſe other ſins ſo oft repeated, deliberated, and contrived, whether conſtitutional ſins, or ſins of profeſſion and vocation, I cannot conceive that they have ſo long been ſettled in the ſame reſolution, without the conſtant concurrence of the will and underſtanding with the reaſon and conſcience of the perſon who is guilty of them: and the repentance which he boaſts to be inſpired with on a ſudden is very hard for me to imagine. I am not of the opinion of the Pythagorean ſect, that men aſſume a new ſoul when they approach the images of the gods to receive their oracles, unleſs they mean that it muſt be foreign, new, and lent for the time, our own ſhewing ſo little ſign of the purification and cleanneſs fit for that office.

True repentance ought to be followed with real amendment.

They act quite contrary to the Stoical precepts, who indeed command us to correct the imperfections and vices which we know ourſelves guilty of, but forbid us thereby to diſturb the tranquility of our minds. Theſe make us believe that they have great vexation and remorſe within, but as for amendment and correction, or diſcontinuance, they give no ſign of it; yet there cannot be a cure till the evil be purged away. If repentance were to be put into one ſcale of the ballance it would out-weigh ſin. I do not know of any quality ſo eaſy to counterfeit as devotion, if the life and manners do not conform to it. The eſſence of it is abſtruſe and occult, the appearances eaſy and pompous.

A man cannot repent of his univerſal form.

As for my part, I may deſire in the general to be what I am not; I may condemn and be out of humour with my whole frame, and pray to God for an entire reformation, and to excuſe my natural infirmity; but this is what I ought not to call repentance methinks, no more than a diſguſt that I am not an angel, nor a Cato. My actions are regulated by, and conformable to what I am, and to my condition. I cannot do better; and repentance does not properly concern things that are not in our power.

It

It is rather regret. I conceive an infinite number of natures, more ſublime and regular than mine; yet I do not amend my faculties, foraſmuch as neither my arm nor my mind will become a whit the more vigorous by conceiving another's to be ſo. If to imagine and wiſh a more noble way of acting than we have would produce a repentance in us, we would then repent of our moſt innocent operations, foraſmuch as we well ſuppoſe that in a more excellent nature they would be conducted with greater perfection and dignity; and we would wiſh to do the ſame. When I conſider my demeanor in my youth, and that of my old age, I find that I have in general behaved with regularity as far as I know. This is all that my reſiſtance can avail. I do not flatter myſelf; in the like circumſtances I would be always the ſame. It is not a ſpot, but rather an univerſal tincture, with which I am ſtained. I have no notion of a repentance that is ſuperficial, moderate, or ceremonious. It muſt ſting me throughout before I can give it that name, and it muſt pierce my heart as deeply and univerſally as God ſees into me.

Why Montaigne did not repent of the management of his affairs.

In matters of trade many good opportunities have eſcaped me for want of management, and yet I made a right choice according as occurrences preſented themſelves. It is my method to chuſe always the eaſieſt and the ſureſt courſe. I find that in my paſt deliberations I have, by my own rule, proceeded with diſcretion according to the ſtate of the ſubject propoſed to me, and would do the ſame, were it a thouſand years hence, on the like occaſions. I do not conſider the thing as it is now, but what it was when I deliberated on it. The force of all counſel lies in the time. Opportunities and affairs inceſſantly fluctuate and change. I have, in my life, fallen into ſome groſs and important errors, not for want of good judgment, but for want of good luck. There are, in our affairs, ſome ſecret circumſtances not to be gueſſed at, particularly in human nature certain ſilent conditions that make no ſhew, and are unknown ſometimes even to the poſſeſſor, which ſtart and ſpring up from incidental cauſes. If my prudence could

not

not penetrate into, or foretel them, I am not disgusted with it: it is confined to its own limits. If the event be against me, and favours that side which I have refused, there is no remedy; I do not blame myself for it: I accuse my luck, and not my performance. This is not what we call repentance.

Counsel is independent of events.

Phocion had given certain advice to the Athenians, which was not followed; and the affair succeeding happily contrary to his opinion, somebody said, Well, Phocion, art thou pleased that this affair turns out so well? I am very glad, said he, that it has so happened; yet I do not repent that I advised otherwise ‖. When my friends apply to me for my opinion, I give it freely and plainly, without considering, as almost all mankind do, that the thing being hazardous it may fall out contrary to my opinion, and then perhaps they may reproach me for my advice; but this is what I am very indifferent about; for they will be to blame for desiring that office which I could not justify myself to refuse them.

Montaigne seldom took another's advice in the management of his affairs, and seldom gave his to other persons.

I scarce ever lay any mistakes or misfortunes of mine to the charge of another person: the truth is, I seldom make use of another's advice, but only for the sake of civility and ceremony, unless it be where I have need of instruction in any science, or information of any fact. For in things where I have only my judgment to make use of, other men's reasons may be of some credit to support me, but of little force to dissuade me. I hear every thing favourably and decently; but I do not remember that to this hour I ever made use of any reason but my own. With me they are but flies or atoms that hover about my will. I lay no great stress upon my own opinions, and as little upon those of other men. Fortune rewards me justly. As I do not receive advice, I give as little. I am seldom asked for it, and more seldom trusted to; and know not of any undertaking, either public or private, that has been the

‖ Plutarch in his Notable sayings of ancient kings, princes, &c. under the article Phocion.

better for my advice; even the persons, whom fortune had in any manner engaged to follow my direction, have chose more willingly to be guided by any other head-piece than mine: and as I am a man altogether as vigilant against the disturbance of my tranquility as the diminution of my authority, I like it the better. By thus neglecting me, they humour me in what I profess, which is to settle and wholly contain myself within myself. It is a pleasure to me to be disinterested in other men's affairs, and not to be any way responsible for them.

Was little troubled for events that fell out contrary to his wishes; and why.

All affairs when they are over, happen as they will, give me little concern; for the imagination, that so it ought to be, puts me out of my pain. They are rolled about in the great revolution of the universe, and linked in the chain of stoical causes. Your fancy cannot, by wish or imagination, move an iota, either past or to come, which the order of things will not totally overturn.

Made little account of the repentance owing purely to old age.

As to the rest, I hate that accidental repentance which old age brings with it. He of old times ‡ who said he was obliged to his years for stripping him of pleasure, was of a different opinion from me. I can never think myself beholden to impotency for any good that it does me. *Nec tam aversa unquam videbitur ab opere suo providentia, ut debiliter inter optime inventa sit*; "nor can Providence ever be thought so averse to its own "work that debility should be found among the best "things." Our appetites are rare in old age. A profound satiety comes upon us after the act. I discern nothing of conscience in this. It is chagrin and weakness that imprint on us a languid phlegmatic quality. We must not suffer ourselves to be wholly carried away by the alterations of nature so as to debase our judgment. Youth and pleasure did not heretofore so far blind me that I did not discern the

‡ This was Sophocles, who being asked if he still enjoyed the pleasures of love, made answer, *Dii meliora: libenter vero istinc, tanquam a domino agresti ac furioso profugi*; "the Gods have done better for me; and glad I am that I have lived to escape from the wild and furious tyranny of love." Cic. de Senectute, cap. 14.

face

face of vice in pleaſure; nor does that diſguſt which years have now brought upon me, hinder me from diſcerning the face of pleaſure in vice. Now that my days of pleaſure are over, I judge of it as if they were not. I, who ſtrictly and attentively ranſack my reaſon, find it the very ſame it was in my moſt licentious age, if it be not perhaps a little weakened and impaired by being grown old; and I am of opinion, that as it does not permit me to embark in pleaſure, for the ſake of my bodily health, it would not give me more allowance now than heretofore for the ſake of my ſoul's health. I do not reckon my reaſon the more vigorous becauſe it has nothing to combat. My temptations are ſo ſhattered and mortified that they are not worth its oppoſition, for with only ſtretching out my hands I overcome them. Should my former concupiſcence be replaced in its view, I fear it would not have ſo much ſtrength to reſiſt it as it had heretofore. I do not find that it has any other notion of pleaſure now than it had then, nor that it has acquired any new light; wherefore if there be a recovery it is a ſcurvy one. Miſerable kind of remedy where health is not to be obtained without a diſeaſe. It is not for our misfortune to perform this office, but for the good fortune of our judgment. I am not influenced by injuries and afflictions to do any thing but to curſe them. This is for people who are not to be rouzed till they feel the ſcourge. My reaſon indeed acts with more freedom in proſperity, but is more diſtracted and harder put to it, to digeſt misfortunes than pleaſures. I ſee beſt in a clear ſky; health premoniſhes me with more alacrity and more benefit than ſickneſs. I did all that I could to repair and regulate myſelf when I had health to enjoy them. I would be aſhamed and vexed that the miſery and misfortune of my old age ſhould be preferred before my good, healthful, ſpiritely, and vigorous years; and that men ſhould judge of me, not by what I have been, but by what I am now that I have as it were ceaſed to be.

Wherein human felicity conſiſts, according to Montaigne.

In my opinion it is in happy living, and not in dying happily, as Antiſthenes ſaid, that human felicity conſiſts. I have not aimed to make a monſtrous addition

of a philoſopher's tail to the head and body of a libertine, nor that this wretched remainder of life ſhould contradict and give the lye to the pleaſanteſt, ſoundeſt, and longeſt part of it. I would fain repreſent myſelf uniform throughout. Were I to lead my life over again, I would live juſt as I have done. I neither complain of the paſt, nor fear the future; and, if I do not deceive myſelf, I have been much the ſame within as without. I am principally obliged to my fortune, that the courſe of my bodily eſtate has been carried on in every thing in its ſeaſon. I have ſeen it in its bud, bloſſoms, and fruit, and now ſee it withered; happily however becauſe naturally. I bear the ailments I have the better as they are at their criſis, and alſo becauſe they give me the more pleaſing remembrance of the long felicity of my paſt life. My wiſdom alſo may, perhaps, have been of the ſame pitch in both ages, but it was more active, and graceful, when young, ſpiritely, and natural, than now that it is broken, peeviſh, and painful. I therefore renounce thoſe caſual and dolorous reformations. God muſt touch our hearts, and our conſciences muſt amend of themſelves by the aid of our reaſon, and not by the decay of our appetites.

What is the wiſdom of old men.

Pleaſure is in itſelf neither pale nor diſcoloured for being diſcerned by eyes that are dim and diſtempered. We ought to love temperance for its own ſake, and in reſpect to God, who has commanded both that and chaſtity. What we derive from catarrhs, and what I am obliged for to my cholic, is neither chaſtity nor temperance. A man cannot boaſt that he deſpiſes and reſiſts pleaſure, if he does not ſee it, and if he does not know it, together with its charms, power, and moſt alluring beauty. I know both the one and the other, I have a right to ſay it: but it ſeems to me that in old age our minds are ſubject to more troubleſome maladies and imperfections than they are in youth. I ſaid the ſame when I was young, and when I was reproached with the want of a beard; and I ſay the ſame now that my grey hairs gain me authority. We call the crabbedneſs of our tempers, and the diſreliſh of preſent things, wiſdom; but in truth we do not ſo much foreſake vices as change them, and in my opinion for worſe.

worſe. Beſides a fooliſh groundleſs pride, nauſeous babble, froward and unſociable humours, ſuperſtition, and a ridiculous thirſt after riches, when the uſe of them is loſt, I find in old age more envy, injuſtice, and malignity. It furrows the mind with more wrinkles than the face; and we never, or very rarely, ſee people who, in growing old, do not grow ſour and muſty. The whole man moves, both towards his perfection and his decay. In conſidering the wiſdom of Socrates, and many circumſtances of his ‖ condemnation, I dare believe that he indulged himſelf by prevarication, in ſome meaſure, for the purpoſe, ſeeing that at 70 years of age he ſuffered ſuch a rich genius as his was to be almoſt totally crampt, and his wonted brightneſs obſcured. What metamorphoſes do I every day ſee made by age in ſeveral of my acquaintance! It is a powerful malady, which creeps upon us naturally, and imperceptibly. Deep ſtudy and great precaution are abſolutely neceſſary to avoid the imperfections it loads us with, or at leaſt to ſlacken their progreſs. I find that, notwithſtanding all my intrenchments, it ſteals upon me one foot after another; I bear up againſt it as well as I can, but I know not what it will bring me to at laſt; but, happen what will, I am content to have it known what I was before I fell.

CHAP. III.

Of three Commerces, i. e. *Familiarities with Men, Women, and Books.*

The chief ability of the human underſtanding.

WE muſt not rivet ourſelves ſo faſt to our humours and complexions. Our chief ſufficiency is to know how to apply ourſelves to various cuſtoms. For a man

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‖ If this be a conjecture only founded on Montaigne's ſagacity, it does him very great honour, for Xenophon tells us expreſly, that in truth

to keep himself tied and bound, by necessity, to one only course, is but bare existence, not living. Those are the most amiable tempers, which are more variable and flexible. It was an honourable character of the elder Cato, *Huic versatile ingenium sic pariter ad omnia fuit, ut natum ad id unum diceres, quodcumque ageret* §; "he had "parts so flexible to every thing, that whatsoever he "took in hand, a man would be apt to say he was form-"ed by nature for that very thing only." Were I to chuse for myself, there is no fashion so good that I would care to be so wedded to, as not to have it in my power to disengage myself from it. Life is a motion uneven, irregular, and various. A man is not his own friend, much less his own master, but rather a slave to himself, who is eternally pursuing his own humour, and such a bigot to his inclinations, that he is not able to turn aside from them. I speak it now at this time of life, when I find it hard to disengage myself from the uneasiness of my mind, by reason that it cannot amuse itself generally, but in things wherein it is embarrassed, nor employ itself because it is so cramped and inflexible. It is apt to magnify a slight subject, and stretches it to such a degree, as to require the application of all its strength. Its inactivity is therefore to me a painful labour, and prejudicial to my health. The minds of most men require foreign matter to quicken and exercise them; mine has need of it rather to compose and settle it, *Vitia otii negotio discutienda sunt* †; "the vices owing to sloth are to be shaken "off by business;" for my most painful, as well as principal study, is to study myself. Books are one sort of those employments that divert me from this study. Upon the first thoughts, which come into thy mind, it bustles and makes trial of its vigour in every respect; exercises its feeling quality, sometimes towards force, at other times towards order and beauty, and then ranges,

truth Socrates defended himself with so much haughtiness before his judges, only from a consideration that at his age death would be better for him than life. This is the subject of the intire preface to that defence made by Socrates before his judges.

§ Tit. Liv. lib. xxxix. cap. 40. † Senec. Ep. 59.

moderation,

moderates, and fortifies itſelf. It has in itſelf wherewith to rouze its faculties. Nature has given to it, as to all other men's, matter enough of its own for its benefit, and ſubjects proper enough both for its invention and judgment.

Meditation an important employment.

Meditation, for a man who can inſpect and exert himſelf with vigour, is a powerful and copious ſtudy. I had rather frame my mind than furniſh it. There is no employment, either more weak or more ſtrong, than that of entertaining a man's thoughts according to the ſtate of his mind. The greateſt men make it their profeſſion, *Quibus vivere eſt cogitare* †; "to whom to live and to "think, are one and the ſame thing." Nature has alſo favoured man with this privilege, that there is nothing we can hold out in ſo long, nor any action to which we more commonly, and more readily incline. It is the buſineſs of the gods, ſays Ariſtotle, and that from which proceeds both their bliſs and ours.

Montaigne was inattentive to frivolous converſation.

The principal uſe of reading to me is that, by the variety of ſubjects, it keeps my reaſon awake, and employs my judgment, not my memory. Few converſations therefore pleaſe me, if there be not life and power in them. It is true, that the gracefulneſs and elegance of a ſpeech captivate and ingroſs my attention as much, or more than the importance or weight of the ſubject: and as I am apt to be ſleepy in all other converſation, and give but little attention thereto, it often happens that in ſuch poor, low diſcourſe, and inſipid chat, I either make drowſy, ſtupid, and ridiculous anſwers, unbecoming even a child, or elſe more indiſcretely and rudely maintain an obſtinate ſilence. I am on the one hand of a penſive temper, which makes me abſent from all but myſelf; and on the other hand have a ſtupid and childiſh ignorance of many common things. By theſe two qualities I have obtained that five or ſix as ſilly ſtories may as truly be reported of me as of any other perſon whatſoever.

† Cic. Tuſc. Queſt. lib. v. cap. 38.

Too delicate in his converſation with the generality of mankind.

But to purſue my ſubject, this difficult temper of mine renders me very delicate of what company I keep, whom I am obliged to examine nicely, and am therefore unfit for common ſociety. We live and trade with the commonalty. If their converſation be troubleſome to us, if we diſdain to apply ourſelves to mean and vulgar ſouls (and ſuch are often as regular as the moſt delicate, and all wiſdom is inſipid that does not accommodate itſelf to the ſtupidity of the vulgar) we muſt no longer intermeddle either with our own affairs, or thoſe of other men; for thoſe, both of a public and private nature, are diſpatched with thoſe people. The motions of the ſoul, that are the leaſt forced and the moſt natural, are the moſt beautiful. Good God! what a vaſt ſervice wiſdom does to thoſe whoſe deſires it reduces within their power! There is no part of knowledge more profitable. "As much as lies in our power," was the favourite maxim and motto of Socrates. A phraſe of great moment this; for we muſt adapt and divert our deſires to things that are the neareſt, and moſt eaſy to be acquired. Is it not a ſilly humour of mine to ſeparate from a thouſand, to whom fortune has joined me, and without whom I cannot live, and ſtick to one or two that are out of the ſphere of my correſpondence? Or rather is it not a fantaſtical deſire of a thing which I can never recover? My gentle behaviour, an enemy to all bitterneſs and moroſeneſs, may eaſily have ſecured me from envy and animoſity; for never man gave more occaſion, to be beloved I will not ſay, but not to be hated; yet the coldneſs of my converſation has juſtly deprived me of the good will of many, who are not to be blamed though they ſhould put another and a worſe conſtruction upon it.

Montaigne paſſionately fond of exquiſite friendſhips, but not qualified to cultivate common friendſhips.

I am very capable of acquiring, and maintaining friendſhips that are exquiſite and uncommon; for as I am eager to cloſe in with ſuch acquaintance as ſuit my taſte, I throw myſelf without reſerve into their arms with ſuch rapture that I

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can hardly fail to ſtick to them, and to make an impreſſion where I faſten; and this I have often found by happy experience. To common friendſhips I am in ſome meaſure cold and indifferent, for my courſe is not natural if it be not with a full ſail; beſides my fortune having trained me from my youth, and tempted me to love one ſingle and perfect friendſhip, it has indeed, in ſome meaſure, put me out of conceit with others; and too much imprinted it on my fancy that, as one of the ancients ſaid, ſuch vulgar companions are the beaſts of the company, though not of the herd. I have alſo a natural averſion to communicate myſelf by halves, and with that modification, ſervile and jealous prudence, which are preſcribed to us in the caſe of numerous and imperfect friendſhips. And this is enjoined chiefly in the preſent age, when it is impoſſible to ſpeak of mankind without danger or miſtake.

How uſeful it is to know how to treat all manner of perſons with familiarity.

Yet I plainly ſee, that he who has the conveniencies (I mean the eſſential conveniencies of life) for his end, as I have, ought to ſhun theſe difficulties and delicacies of humour as much as the plague. I would commend a mind of various qualities, which knows both to ſtrain and ſlacken its vigour, that finds itſelf at eaſe in all ſtages of fortune, a man that can diſcourſe with his neighbour about his building, hunting, or quarrel, and that takes pleaſure in chatting with a carpenter, or a gardener. I envy thoſe who can condeſcend to a familiarity with the meaneſt of their ſervants, and to hold a converſation with their train of followers: and I diſlike the advice of Plato, that men ſhould always ſpeak in a magiſterial ſtrain to their ſervants, whether male or female, without being ever facetious or familiar *. For beſides what my reaſon tells me, it is both inhuman and unjuſt to ſet ſo great a value upon that ſame prerogative of fortune; and thoſe governments, wherein there is not ſo great a diſparity admitted betwixt maſters and their valets, ſeem to me the moſt equitable. Other men ſtudy

* Magiſterial language to ſervants cenſured, De Legibus, lib. vi. p. 872, edit. Francfort 1602.

how

how to to elevate and exalt their minds; I to render mine humble and lowly. It is only blameable in being too diffuse.

Narras, et genus Æaci,
Et pugnata sacro bella sub Ilio:
Quo Chium pretio cadum
Mercemur, quis aquam temperet ignibus,
Quo præbente domum, et quotâ
Pelignis caream frigoribus, taces *.

Old Æacus you derive from Jove,
And tell what kin he had above:
You all the Trojan wars recite;
Who make baths, and who invite,
But not what Chian wine will cost,
Or yet a fire to warm in frost.

It is necessary to put ourselves on an equality with those we converse with.

Thus, as the valour of the Lacedæmonians stood in need of being moderated, and of the sweet and harmonious sound of flutes to mollify them in battle, lest they should be guilty of temerity and fury, whereas all other nations commonly make use of strong and shrill sounds and voices, which excite and inflame the soldiers courage to the last degree; so methinks that, contrary to the usual form, in the exercise of our minds we have more need of ballast than sail, of coldness and calmness than of heat and hurry. Above all things, it is my opinion, egregiously playing the fool, to make a parade of wit in the company of those who have none; to talk always as it were in print, and to use a stiff quaint style; or, on the other hand, *Favellar in punta di forchetta*; "to affect a finical one like the ladies." You must let yourself down to the level of those you converse with, and sometimes too affect ignorance. You must lay aside strength and subtlety of argument: it is enough to preserve decency and order in common conversation; and as for the rest, crawl upon the ground if they desire it. The learned are apt to stumble at this stone; they al-

* Horace, ode 19. lib. iii. ver. 2, &c.

ways

ways make a parade of their ſuperior talents, and ſcatter their books every where; ſo that in theſe days they have ſo peſtered the cloſets and ears of the ladies with them, that if they have not retained the ſubſtance, they have at the leaſt the ſhew of them, ſo that, let the ſubject of their diſcourſe be what it will, they ſpeak and write in a manner that is new and learned.

Whether women ought to be learned.

Hoc ſermone pavent; hoc iram, gaudia, curas,
Hoc cunctata effundunt animi ſecreta, et quid ultrâ?
Concumbunt dorkè †.

In the ſame language they expreſs their fears,
Their anger and their joys, their griefs and cares,
And vent the ſecrets of their ſouls; what more?
In the ſame learned phraſe they play the whore.

They quote Plato and St. Thomas in things for which the firſt perſon they meet would be as good authority. The learning that cannot penetrate their ſouls, hangs on their tongues. If thoſe of quality will believe me, they would be content with their own natural treaſures. They conceal and cover their own beauties under others that are foreign. It is a great weakneſs to put out their own light to ſhine by a borrowed luſtre. They are interred and embalmed alive by art ‡, *De capſula totæ*, "being "painted and perfumed from head to foot." It is becauſe they do not know themſelves ſufficiently. The world has nothing fairer than they are. This is their doing honour to the arts and painting, even paint itſelf. What need have they of any thing but to live beloved and honoured? For this they not only have, but know too much. They need only rouſe a little, and give freſh

† Juv. Sat. vi. ver. 188.

‡ This is an expreſſion of Seneca, which he applies to the petits maitres of his time, "Noſti complures ju-"venes barbâ et comâ nitidos de capſulâ totos." epiſt. 95. He tells us elſewhere of one of theſe fops who, being carried by his ſlaves from the bath in a chair, thought fit to aſk them, whether or no he was ſeated? as if it was a thing beneath his honour to know what he did himſelf without aſking. Seneca de Brevit. Vitæ, cap. 12. I have not yet heard that any of our petits maitres have come up to this Roman fop.

warmth

warmth to their internal faculties. When I see them studying rhetoric, law, logic, and the like, which are so insignificant trifles, unnecessary for their occasions, I begin to fear that the men who advise them, do it that they may thereby have authority to be their masters. For what other excuse can I find for them. It is enough that they can, without our instruction, give the charms of their eyes an air that is brisk, stern, or languishing; that they can season a denial with severity, suspence, and favour, and that they are not at a loss for an interpreter of the speeches made for their service. With this knowledge they govern with a high hand, and rule both the regents and the scholars.

What branches of knowledge are fittest for the women.

If nevertheless they think much to give place to us in any thing whatsoever, and have a curiosity to be book-learned, poetry is an amusement proper for their occasions, it being a wanton, witty, dissembling, and prattling art, all pleasure and all shew like themselves. They will also reap many advantages from history. In moral philosophy they will be furnished with lessons that will enable them to judge of our humours and conditions, to defend themselves from our treacheries, to regulate the precipitancy of their own desires, to make good use of their liberty, to lengthen the pleasures of life, and mildly to bear the inconstancy of an humble servant, the roughness of a husband, and the disagreeableness of age, wrinkles, and the like. This is the utmost share that I would allow them in the sciences.

The good use of retirement.

There are some particular tempers that are retired and recluse. I am naturally formed for communication and production. I am all open and undisguised, born for society and friendship. The solitude which I am fond of myself, and recommend to others, is chiefly with no other view than to withdraw my affections and thoughts into myself; to restrain and check not my proceedings, but my desires and cares, resigning all solicitude that is foreign, with a mortal aversion to servitude and obligation; and not so much to the company of men as to the mul-

multiplicity of buſineſs. To ſay the truth, local ſolitude rather expands and ſets me at large. I the more willingly embark in affairs of ſtate and the world when I am alone. At the Louvre, and in the crowd of the court, I keep within my own ſphere: the throng makes me retire into myſelf, and I never entertain myſelf ſo wantonly, ſo licentiouſly, and ſo ſingularly, as in places of reſpect and ceremonious prudence. Our follies do not provoke me to laughter, but our wiſdom. I am conſtitutionally no enemy to the buſtle of court. I have ſpent part of my life there, and capable of behaving chearfully in great companies, provided it be now and then, and at my own time. But that effeminacy of judgment, of which I have been ſpeaking, neceſſarily attaches me to ſolitude; nay at my own houſe, in the midſt of a numerous family, and a houſe as much frequented as any, I ſee people enow, but ſeldom ſuch as I am fond of converſing with. And I there reſerve, both for myſelf and others, an unuſual liberty. There is in my houſe no ſuch thing as ceremony, attendance, conducting, and the like fatiguing rules of our courteſy. (O! ſervile and troubleſome cuſtom!) Every one there governs himſelf in his own way, let who will ſpeak his thoughts; while I am mute in deep meditation, and ſhut up in my cloſet, without any offence to my gueſts.

Character of the men whoſe familiarity is worth ſeeking.

The men, whoſe ſociety and familiarity I covet, are thoſe they call honeſt and ingenious men; and the idea of theſe puts me out of conceit with others. This, if rightly conſidered, is the rareſt of our characters, and a character which is chiefly owing to nature. The end of this commerce is ſimply private friendſhip, frequent viſits and conference, the correſpondence of ſouls without other advantage. In our diſcourſe, all ſubjects are alike to me. I care not whether there be weight or depth in it. There is ſtill a grace and pertinence in it. The whole is tinctured with a judgment mature and ſteddy, and mixed with good nature, frankneſs, chearfulneſs, and friendſhip. It is not only in diſcourſing on the affairs of kings and ſtates, that our underſtanding diſplays its beauty and force, but it ſhews it as much in private

private confabulation. I know what my people mean, even by their ſilence and ſmiles, and diſcover them better perhaps at table than at the council. Hippomachus ſaid juſtly, that he knew good wreſtlers by only ſeeing them walk in the ſtreets. If learning will pleaſe to bear a part in our conference, it will not be rejected; not the magiſterial, imperious, and impertinent kind, as is generally uſed, but that which is ſubordinate and docile. All we intend by it is to paſs away the time, for at the hour of being inſtructed and preached to, we will go ſeek it in its throne. May it condeſcend to favour us for this once if it pleaſe; for as uſeful and deſirable as it is, I ſuppoſe that, though we might want it, we could well enough diſpenſe with it, and do our buſineſs without it. A perſon of good breeding, and uſed to converſe with mankind, will naturally be agreeable to every body. Art is nothing but the counter-part and regiſter of what ſuch ſouls produce.

Commerce with women.

The converſation of fine, well-bred women is alſo to me a ſweet enjoyment. *Nam nos quoque oculos eruditos habemus* *; "for we alſo are verſed in the art of ogling." If the ſoul has not ſo much enjoyment in this as in the firſt, the bodily ſenſes, which likewiſe have the greateſt ſhare of this, reduce it to a proportion near to the other, but in my opinion not quite. It is a commerce however, wherein a man had need be a little upon his guard, and eſpecially thoſe of a vigorous conſtitution, as mine is. In my youth I got a ſcald by it, and ſuffered all the torments which the poets ſay will happen to thoſe who run into this commerce, without order and judgment. It is true this ſcourge taught me more wit.

Quicumque Argoticâ de claſſe Caphareâ fugit,
Semper ab Euboicis vela retorquet aquis †.

The ſhip that would not on Caphareus run,
Always is ſure th' Eubœan ſtreight to ſhun.

It is madneſs to fix a man's thought wholly upon it, and to engage in it with a furious and indiscreet affection;

* Cicer. Paradox. v. cap. 2. † Ovid Triſt. lib. i. el. 1.

but

but on the other hand, to be concerned in it without true love, and without the attachment of the will, like the comedians, to play a part that is made common by time and custom, without contributing any thing of his own to it but words; it is indeed providing for his safety, but in as scandalous a manner as he that abandons his honour or his profit, or his pleasure, from fear of danger. For it is certain that from such a proceeding no fruit can be expected to satisfy an honest soul. A man cannot take real pleasure in the enjoyment of what he has not in good earnest desired; and this I say, though fortune should be so unjust as to favour their dissimulation, which often happens, because there is none of the sex, though as ugly as the devil, who does not think herself very amiable, who does not think herself preferable, either for her youth, her hair, or her gait (for with the ugly women it is universally the same as with those that are handsome); and the Brachman virgins, who have no other recommendation, but that of the common crier, who calls the people together, come forth into the square to expose their matrimonial parts, to try if these at least are not tempting enough to procure them husbands. Consequently there is not one who does not easily suffer herself to be engaged by the first vow that is made to serve her. Now, from this treachery so common in the men of this age, it must needs happen, as we have already seen by experience, that the women rally and reunite themselves on purpose to avoid us, or else form their ranks by the example we give them, play their part of the farce, and give way to this negociation without passion, care, or love. *Neque affectui suo aut alieno obnoxiæ* *; "neither slaves to their own passion, nor to "that of another person;" believing, according to the persuasion of Lysias in Plato, that they may with the more advantage and convenience surrender themselves up to us, the less we love them. The result will be as it is in comedies, where the audience has as much or more pleasure than the actors. For my part, I have no more

It ought to be attended with sincerity.

* Tacitus's Annal. lib. xiii. cap. 45. where the historian speaks only of the famous Poppea, the wife of Nero, the perfect model of coquettry.

notion of a Venus without a Cupid, than of a mother without a child. They are what mutually lend and owe their existence to one another. Therefore this cheat rebounds upon the person that commits it; to whom indeed it is of little or no expence, nor on the other hand does he get any thing by it of value. They who have made Venus a goddess, have taken notice that her chief beauty was incorporeal and spiritual; but the Venus whom these people court is not so much as human, nor even brutal, but so very gross and terrestrial, that the very beasts will not accept her. We see that imagination and desire often heats and stimulates them before the body does: we see in both the sexes, that in the herd, they make choice and trial of their affections, and that they have among themselves an acquaintance of old good will. Even those which old age has deprived of bodily strength, do yet tremble, neigh, and twitter for love. We see them before the fact, full of hope and heat; and when the body has played its part, still tickled with the sweet remembrance of it; and we see some animals that swell with pride after the performance, and being tired and satiated, do yet, by vociferation, express a triumphant joy. He that has nothing to do, but only to discharge his body of a natural necessity, need to find employment for another by such curious preparations. This is not food for a coarse hoggish appetite.

Montaigne's taste in his amours.

As one who does not desire to be thought better than I am, I shall now tell of the follies of my youth. I have seldom been addicted to mercenary and common embraces, not only for my health's sake (and yet with all my care I had two mischances tho' they were slight forerunners) but also from a contempt of what was vulgar and venal. I chose to heighten this pleasure with difficulty, by desire, and a certain kind of vanity: and I was of the emperor Tiberius's mind *, who, in his amours, was as much smitten with modesty and an honourable extraction, as with any other quality; and of the taste of Flora, the courtezan †, who never

* Tacit. Annal. lib. vi. cap. 1. † After having turned over many books in search of Montaigne's authority for this story, I found in Bayle's Dictionary

never proſtituted herſelf to leſs than a dictator, a conſul, or a cenſor; and ſolaced herſelf in the dignity of her lovers. Certainly pearl and tiſſue, titles and attendants, add ſomething to the pleaſure.

Perſonal beauties preferable in amours to thoſe of the mind.

As for the reſt, I had a great liking to wit, provided the body was not exceptionable. For, to confeſs the truth, if either of theſe two beauties muſt of neceſſity be wanting, I would prefer the perſonal before the rational. The latter is of uſe in better things; but in the ſubject of love, a ſubject in which the ſenſes of ſeeing and feeling are chiefly concerned, ſomething may be done without the charms of the mind, but without thoſe of the body nothing. Beauty is the true advantage of the women, and ſo peculiarly theirs, that what we have, though it requires other features to render it ſuch, is only in its beſt ſtate when it is puerile and beardleſs, and common with theirs. It is ſaid that thoſe preferred to the ſervice of the grand ſignior, on the ſcore of their beauty, the number of whom is very great, are diſmiſſed at 22 years of age at the fartheſt. Reaſon, prudence, and the offices of friendſhip, are more commonly found among the men; and therefore they govern the affairs of the world.

Of reading, or the third ſort of converſation.

The two ſorts of commerce, or converſation, which we have mentioned, viz. that with men by a free and familiar converſation, and that with women by love, are accidental, and dependent on another. The one does not occur ſo often as is to be wiſhed; the other decays with age; ſo that they could never have been ſufficient for the neceſſities of my life. That with books, which is the third, is much more ſure, and more within our power. It yields to the former in the other advantages, but has conſtancy and readineſs of ſervice for its ſole ſhare. It accompanies,

Dictionary that it is Brantome, who in his lives, Des Femmes Galantes, tom. i. p. 313, &c. ſays that the courtezan Flora was of a good family dan lineage; and that, whereas Lais was a common proſtitute to all mankind, Flora only obliged the great, inſomuch that ſhe had this inſcription over her door, "Ye Kings, Princes, Dictators, Conſuls, "Cenſors, Pontiffs, Queſtors, Ambaſſadors, and other great men, enter and welcome; but no others."

and is assisting to me wherever I go: it comforts me in old age and solitude; it eases me of the weight of idle time and delivers me at any hour from disagreeable company; and it blunts the edge of pain, if it be not extreme, and has not the entire possession of me. To divert my self from an uneasy thought, it is but to run to my books; they presently drive it out of my mind, by turning its attention to them: and though they see that I only have recourse to them for want of other more real, natural, and lively benefits, they do not reflect on me for it, but always receive me with the same countenance. "He "may well go on foot," they say, "who leads his horse in "his hand." And our James, king of Naples and Sicily, who, while handsome, young, and healthy, caused himself to be carried up and down in a hand-barrow, upon a sorry mattrass, dressed in a vest of grey cloth, and a cap of the same; yet attended in great royal pomp with horse-litters, led horses of all sorts, gentlemen and officers; put on an austerity that was effeminate and unsteady. The sick man is not to be pitied who has his cure in his pocket. In the experience and practice of this, which is a very true sentence, consists all the benefit which I receive from books; and yet in fact I make as little use of them, in a manner, as they who know them not. I enjoy them as misers do their hoards, by knowing that I have them to use when I please. With this right of possession my mind is satisfied, and at rest. I never travel without my books, be it in time of war or of peace; yet sometimes for several days or months, I do not look into them. I will read by and by, I say to myself, or tomorrow when I am in the humour. Mean while the time runs away without any inconvenience to me; for it is impossible to say how tranquil and easy I am in this consideration, that I have them by me, to divert myself with them whenever I please; and in the thought of what an assistance they are to me in life.—This is the best viaticum I have yet known for this mortal pilgrimage, and I extremely pity those men of understanding who are unprovided with it; yet I rather accept of any other kind of amusement, be it ever so light, because this cannot fail me.

The situation of Montaigne's library.

When I am at home I the oftener visit my library, from which I at once survey all the operations of my family. It is over the entrance into my house, from whence I have a view under me of my court-yards and garden, and of most of the offices of my house. There I turn over one book, then another, on various subjects, without order, and without design. One while I ruminate, another while I copy and dictate, as I walk to and fro, such whimsies as these in my Essays. It is in the third story of a tower, of which the first is my chapel, the second a chamber with its closets, where I often lie to be retired; above it is a great wardrobe. This was formerly the most useless part of my house. I there pass away the most of the days of my life, and most of the hours in the day, but am never there at night. At the end of it there is a very neat closet, with pleasant window-lights, and a fire-place. And was I not more afraid of the trouble than of the expence, the trouble, which drives me from all application to business, I could easily join to it on each side, and on the same floor, a gallery of 100 paces in length, and 12 in breadth; there being walls already raised, though for another design, to the height that is requisite. Every retired place should have a walk in it. For if I sit still my thoughts sleep. My fancy does not operate so well as when it is put in motion by that of my legs. They who study without a book are all in the same condition. The form of my study is round, and has no more level than what is taken up by my table and chair; so that I have a view of all my books in five rows of shelves, quite round me. It has three noble and free prospects, and is sixteen paces in diameter. I am not so constantly there in the winter, for my house is perched upon an eminence, as its name imports, and this part of it is most exposed to the wind, which pleases me the better, for not being so easy of access, and a little remote, as well for the benefit of exercise as for being more retired. It is there that I am in my kingdom, as we say; and there I endeavour to render myself sole monarch, and to sequester this corner from all society, conjugal, filial, and civil. Every where else I

have but a verbal authority, and of a confused essence. Miserable is that man, in my opinion, who has no place at home where to be by himself, to entertain himself alone, or to conceal himself from others. Ambition sufficiently plagues its proselytes by keeping them always in shew, like a statue in a market-place, *Magna servitus est magna fortuna* *; "a great fortune is a great slavery:" those who possess it have scarce a retirement for the necessities of nature. I have thought nothing so severe, in the austerity of life which our friars affect, as what I see in some of their fraternities; namely, to have a perpetual society of place by rule, and numerous assistants among them in every action whatever; and I think it somewhat more tolerable to be always alone, than never to be so.

The Muses are the sport, and pastime of the mind.

If any one shall tell me, that it is undervaluing the Muses to make use of them only for mirth and pastime, I shall say he does not know the value of pleasure, play, and pastime, so well as I do; I live from hand to mouth, and, with reverence be it spoken, I only live for myself; in that all my designs terminate. I studied, when young, for the sake of ostentation, afterwards for wisdom, and now for my recreation, but never for gain. A vain and prodigal longing I had for this sort of furniture, to supply my own necessity, and to dress and adorn me; but I have long since weaned myself of it.

The inconveniencies attached to the pleasure which books give.

Books have many charming qualities to such as know how to chuse them; but ther is no good without its evil. This is a pleasure, not more pure and untainted than others; it has its inconveniencies, and great ones too. The soul is exercised in it, but the body, the care of which I ought not to forget, remains in the mean time without action, grows heavy and stupid. I know of no excess more prejudicial to me, or more to be avoided in this my declining age. Thus have I given you my three favourite, and particular occupations. I speak not of the duties I owe to mankind by civil obligation.

* Senec. Consolatio ad Polybium, cap. 26.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.
Of Diverſion.

I Was once employed to conſole a lady, who was truly afflicted; for moſt of their mournings are affected and ceremonious.

Uberibus ſemper lachrymis, ſemperque paratis,
In ſtatione ſuâ, atque expectantibus illam,
Quo jubeat manare modo *.

They always have a dam for preſent uſe,
Ready prepar'd whene'er they draw the ſluice,
On leaſt pretence of joys, or griefs, or fears,
To ſally out in falſe diſſembling tears.

The uſefulneſs of adminiſtring diverſion by way of comfort

It is going the wrong way to work to oppoſe this paſſion, for oppoſition only provokes it, and makes them more ſorrowful. The evil is exaſperated by the warmth of argument. We ſee in common diſcourſe, that what ſlips unguardedly from a man, if another goes to controvert it, the former takes it in dudgeon, and juſtifies what he had ſaid; eſpecially if it be a matter wherein he is intereſted. Beſides, in ſo doing, you enter upon your work in a rough manner; whereas the firſt viſits of a phyſician, to his patient, ought to be gentle, gay, and pleaſant. Never did an ill-looking ſullen phyſician do any thing to purpoſe. On the contrary therefore a man muſt, in order to make his way, ſooth the patient's complaints, and expreſs ſome approbation and excuſe for them. By this diſcretion you gain credit to proceed farther; and, by an eaſy and inſenſible gradation, you fall into a reaſoning that is more ſolid and proper for their cure. I, whoſe chief aim it was to deceive thoſe byſtanders who had their eyes fixed upon me, thought fit to palliate the diſeaſe; though indeed I find, by experience, that I have an aukward and unlucky hand

* Juv. ſat. vi. ver. 272, &c.

at perſuaſion. My arguments are either too poignant, too dry, or too blunt and lifeleſs. After I had for a while applied myſelf to her grievance, I did not attempt to cure it by ſtrong and lively arguments, either becauſe I had them not to uſe, or becauſe I thought to gain my point better another way; neither did I ſet about the choice of the various methods of conſolation preſcribed by philoſophy; as that what we complain of is no evil, according to Cleanthes †; that it is a ſlight evil, as the Peripatetics ſay; that to complain thus is neither juſt nor laudable, according to Chryſippus; nor the method preſcribed by Epicurus, more ſuitable to my taſte, viz. ſhifting the thought from things that are afflicting to thoſe that are pleaſant; nor like Cicero, to make a collection of all theſe together, in order to diſpenſe them occaſionally. But, by ſoftly weakening the force of my arguments, and turning them by degrees ſometimes to ſubjects nearer to the preſent caſe, and at other times to thoſe that were a little more remote; as ſhe attended to me, I inſenſibly deprived her of her ſorrow, and kept her calm and quite compoſed as long as I was with her. I diverted the complaint; but they who ſucceeded me in the ſame ſervice found no amendment in her, for I had not gone to the root.

The method of diverting the enemy, employed ſucceſsfully in war and in negociations.

Perhaps I may have glanced elſewhere on ſome kind of public diverſions: and the practice of military diverſions, which Pericles made uſe of in the Peloponneſian war, and of a thouſand more ſuch in other places, for drawing off the enemy's forces from a country, is too frequent in hiſtory. It was an ingenious ſtratagem by which the Sieur de Himbercourt ‡ ſaved both himſelf and others, in the city of Liege, when the duke of Burgundy, who beſieged it, made him enter into it to execute the articles that were agreed to for the ſurrender. The towns-people, who aſſembled in the night for that purpoſe, began to mutiny againſt the agreement, and many of them reſolved to

† Cicer. Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. iii. cap. 31. ‡ You will find this ſtory at full length in the Memoirs of Philip de Comines, lib. ii. cap. 3.

fall

fall foul upon the negociators of it, whom they had in their power. He feeling the guſt of this firſt ſtorm of the people, who were about ruſhing into his quarters to kill him ſuddenly, ſent out two of the inhabitants of the city (for he had ſome of them then preſent with him) to make an offer to the town-council of freſh, and more favourable terms, which he had framed on the ſpot for the preſent occaſion. Theſe two men diverted the firſt ſtorm, by the repair of the enraged rabble to the town-houſe, to hear and conſider of the ſubject of their commiſſion. The deliberation was ſhort, and ſo a ſecond ſtorm aroſe with as much fury as the other; whereupon he diſpatched four freſh mediators, of the ſame quality, proteſting that they had now better conditions to offer to them, and ſuch as would give them entire content and ſatisfaction; by which means the people were again repreſſed. In ſhort, by thus diverting their fury with ſuch a contrivance of amuſements, as made them ſpend it in vain conſultations, by which it was at laſt laid aſleep, he ſpun out the affair to another day, which was the principal thing he wanted.

How Atalanta was diverted, and thereby defeated in a race.

This other ſtory is alſo of the ſame ſtamp. Atalanta, a virgin of extraordinary beauty, in order to diſengage herſelf from a thouſand, or more ſuitors, who courted her in marriage, propoſed this condition to them, that ſhe would accept of him for a huſband that ſhould equal her in running, provided† that they who came ſhort of her ſhould be put to death. There were enow who thought the prize very well worth ſuch a riſque, and who ſuffered the penalty of this cruel bargain. Hippomanes, being to take trial after the others, invoked the tutelar goddeſs of his amorous paſſion, and implored her aſſiſtance, who, hearing his petition, furniſhed him with three golden apples, and an inſtruction how to uſe them. The field on which they ran being quite open, as ſoon as Hippomanes perceived his miſtreſs cloſe at his

† "Præmia veloci conjux thalamique dabuntur:
"Mors pretium tardis: ea lex certaminis eſto."
Ovid, Met. lib. x. fab. 11. ver. 12. 13.

heels, he, as if by inadvertency, let fall one of the apples, the beauty of which was so tempting to the virgin, that she failed not to turn out of the way to take it up.

Obstupuit virgo, nitidique cupidine pomi
Declinat cursus, aurumque volubile tollit *.

The nimble virgin, dazzled to behold
The shining apple rolling on the mold,
Stopp'd her career to seize the tempting gold.

He did the same, when he saw himself hard pressed, by the second and third apples, till, by thus diverting her, and making her go often out of her way, he won the race.

The diversion of the mind to other objects a useful method for the cure of its disorders.

When physicians cannot purge off a catarrh, they divert and turn it to some other less dangerous part. And I find also that this is the most ordinary practice for diseases of the mind. The mind, says Cicero, is sometimes to be drawn off to other thoughts, pursuits, cares, and occupations, and must often be cured, like sick persons, by the change of place †. It gives a little jostle to a man's disorders; it neither makes him sustain, nor diminish their attack, and only makes him decline and turn out of the way from it.

It belongs only to a Socrates to be familiar with death.

This other lesson is too sublime and too difficult. It is for men of the first class to pause upon, consider, and judge of it. It belongs only to a Socrates, not to change countenance when he looks at death, but to grow familiar, and to sport with it. He seeks for no comfort but what he expects from that. To die appears to him a natural and indifferent accident. It is thereon that he fixes his sight and resolution, without looking elsewhere.

What induced the disciples of Hegesias to deprive themselves of life.

The disciples of Hegesias, who actually starved themselves to death, and were animated to it by the fine language of his instructions, which was so powerful, that king Ptolemy forbad him to entertain

* Ovid, Metam. id. ibid. ver. 107, &c.
† Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. iv. cap. 35.

his

his followers any more with ſuch homicide doctrines *; thoſe diſciples, I ſay, do not conſider death in itſelf, nor do they judge of it. It is not on that they fix their thoughts; they run towards, and aim at a new being.

Whether it is owing to a firmneſs of ſoul that thoſe who are going to die on a ſcaffold give way to violent fits of devotion.

Thoſe poor wretches that we ſee brought upon a ſcaffold, full of ardent devotion; and therein employing all their ſenſes as far as poſſible, their ears to the inſtructions given them, their eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, and their voices employed in loud prayers, with a vehement and continual emotion, do things doubtleſs which are laudable and proper for ſuch a neceſſity. We ought to commend them for their devotion, but not properly for their conſtancy. They ſhun the encounter, they turn death out of their thoughts, and amuſe themſelves with ſome trifle or other, as children are amuſed when a ſurgeon goes to prick them with the lancet. I have ſeen ſome who, when they have happened to look down upon thoſe dreadful inſtruments of death that are near them, have fainted, and furiouſly turned their thoughts another way. Thoſe who are to be caſt from a frightful precipice, are adviſed either to ſhut their eyes, or turn them to another ſide.

The conſtancy of Subrius Flavius, juſt as he was going to be executed.

Subrius Flavius, the general, being, by Nero's command, to be put to death, and by the hands of Niger, another general, when they led him to the place of execution, Flavius perceiving the hollow that Niger had cauſed to be made for his neck, to be badly contrived, ſaid to the ſoldiers, who were preſent, "neither is this "according to military diſcipline." When Niger exhorted him to keep his head ſteddy, "do you but "ſtrike," ſaid he, "as ſteddily ‡." And he was right in his gueſs, for Niger's arm trembled, ſo that he made ſeveral ſtrokes at his neck before he cut off his head. This man indeed ſeems to have had his thoughts ſteddily fixed on the ſubject.

* Valer. Max. lib. viii. cap. 9. Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. i. cap. 34.
‡ Tacit. Annal. lib. xv. cap. 67.

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Whether men think much of death in a battle or a duel.

He that dies in a battle, sword in hand, neither thinks, apprehends, nor considers of death, being diverted from the idea of it by the heat of the battle. An honest man of my acquaintance falling down by a thrust in a combat, and receiving nine or ten stabs from his adversary as he lay stretched on the ground, every one present called out to him to examine his conscience; but he told me afterwards, that though he heard what they said, it nothing moved him, and that he thought of nothing but how to disengage himself, and be revenged. He killed his man in that same rencounter. He who brought L. Syllanus *, the sentence of his death, did him very great service, forasmuch as that having heard his answer †, "that he was well prepared to die, but not by the hand "of an executioner," he rushed upon him with his soldiers, when he, being quite unarmed, defended himself obstinately with his fists and feet, till he received so many wounds that he was killed, after having, by this sudden frenzy, dissipated the painful apprehension of the lingering death for which he was designed.

The different considerations which hinder us from thinking directly of death.

We always think of something else; either the expectation of a better life lays hold of us, and supports us, or the hopes of the valour of our children, or of the honour that will be hereafter done to our names, or the escape from the evils of this world, or the vengeance that threatens those who are the authors of our death. Poor Dido says,

Spero equidem mediis, si quid pia numina possunt,
Supplicia hausurum scopulis, et nomine Dido
Sæpe vocaturum.

* * * * * * * *

Audiam: et hæc manes veniet mihi fama sub imos ||.

Sure, if the gods have any pow'r at all,
Split on the rocks, thou wilt on Dido call;
But all in vain: thy shipwreck I shall know
By fame convey'd me to the shades below.

* Tacitus calls him Lucius Silanus, Annal. lib. xvi. cap. 7. † Tacit. Annal. lib. xvi. cap. 9. || Virgil, Æneid. lib. iv. ver. 382, &c.

Xenophon

Xenophon was ſacrificing, with a crown upon his head, when news was brought to him of the death of his ſon Cryllus, ſlain at the battle of Mantinea *. At the firſt intelligence of it he took off his crown, and threw it on the ground; but hearing, in the ſequel of the narrative, how valiantly he fell, he took it up, and replaced it on his head. Epicurus himſelf, at his death is comforted by the conſideration of the utility and eternity of his writings. *Omnes clari et nobilitati labores, fiunt tolerabiles* †; "all works that are illuſtrious and renowned, are to be "borne with." And the ſame wound, the ſame fatigue are not equally intolerable, as Xenophon ſays, to a general of an army and a common ſoldier. Epaminondas died with much more chearfulneſs when he was informed that victory had declared for him. *Hæc ſunt ſolatia, hæc fomenta ſummorum dolorum* ‡; "theſe are the leni-"tives, theſe the fomentations of the greateſt ſorrows." Other circumſtances of the like kind amuſe and entertain us, and turn off our conſideration of the thing in itſelf. Even the arguments of philoſophy are always edging and glancing on the ſubject, without ſcarce touching the exterior part. The greateſt man of the chief ſchool of philoſophy, which ſuperintended the others, I mean the great Zeno, forms theſe ſyllogiſms with reſpect to death and drunkenneſs. *Nullum malum glorioſum eſt; mors autem glorioſa eſt; mors ergo non eſt malum* §; "no evil is honourable; but death is honour-"able; therefore death is not an evil." Nobody truſts a drunken man with a ſecret, but any one will truſt a wiſe man; therefore no wiſe man is a drunkard. Is this hitting the mark? I am pleaſed to ſee that theſe firſt rate geniuſes cannot diveſt themſelves of their fellowſhip with us. With all their pretended perfections, they are ſtill but ſtupid mortals.

The way to diſſipate a violent longing for revenge.

Revenge is a ſweet paſſion, and ſtrongly imprinted in nature. I ſee it plainly, though I have no experience of it. To divert a young prince from it lately, I

* Valer. Max. lib. v. § 10. † Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. ii. cap. 25.
‡ Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. ii. cap. 24. § Senec. epiſt. 82, 83.

did

did not offer to say, that, to the man who had smote him on one cheek, he should turn the other also, in obedience to charity; nor did I endeavour to set before him the tragical events which poetry ascribes to this passion. I did not meddle with his passion, but tried, for a fancy, to give him a relish of the beauty of a contrary quality; and, by representing the honour, favour, and good will, which he would acquire by good nature, I gave his mind a turn to ambition. Thus I carried my point.

The usefulness of making such a diversion in the passion of love.

If your affection in the article of love be too strong, disperse it, say they; and they are perfectly right, for I myself have often tried it with advantage. Break it into desires of various kinds, of which, if you please, there may be one regent and paramount; but lest it should tyrannize and domineer over you, weaken, and give it some pause, by dividing and diverting it.

*Cum morosa vago singultiet inguine vena *.*
Conjicio humorem collectum in corpora quæque †.

When one amour engrosses all thy mind
Discharge thy loins on all the leaky kind:
For that's a wiser way than to restrain
Within thy swelling nerves, that hoard of pain.

And look to it in time, lest it prove too troublesome to deal with when it has once got possession of you.

Si non prima novis conturbes vulnera plagis,
Volgivagaque vagus venere ante recentia cures.

Unless you fancy ev'ry one you view,
Ramble in love, and cure old wounds by new.

It is possible to be disengaged from one passion by the means of another.

I was once disturbed by a strong passion, according to my natural temper, though not so vehement as just; and perhaps had been undone by it if I had merely trusted to my own strength. Having need of a

* Pers. sat. vi. ver. 73. † Lucret. lib. iv. ver. 1063, &c.

powerful

powerful diverſion to draw me out of it, I grew amorous by art and by ſtudy, wherein I was aſſiſted by my youth. Love relieved me and reſcued me from the evil, which was brought upon me by friendſhip. It is the ſame in every other caſe. If a violent imagination poſſeſſes me, I think it the ſhorter way to change than to conquer it, I depute one at leaſt different from it, if not contrary to it. Variation always relieves, diſſolves, and diſſipates. If I cannot encounter with it, I eſcape from it, and, in avoiding it, I ſlip out of the way, and uſe craft. By ſhifting of places, buſineſs, and company, I hide myſelf in the crowd of other amuſements and ſentiments, where it loſes the trace of me, and wanders out of my way.

How time cures us of our paſſions.

In this manner nature proceeds, by the aid of inconſtancy; for the time ſhe has given us for the ſovereign cure of our paſſions, gains its effect chiefly by reaſon that ſupplying our imagination with a ſuperfœtation of objects, it looſens and diſſolves the firſt apprehenſion how ſtrong ſoever. A wiſe man viſits his dying friend almoſt as much at the end of twenty-five years as in the firſt year; and, according to Epicurus, altogether as much, for he did not think the foreſight of troubles, or their duration, an alleviation of them. But ſo many other thoughts run acroſs this that it languiſhes, and is at length wearied out.

The way to diſſipate common reports.

Alcibiades *, in order to take off the fondneſs of the people for common reports, cut off the ears and tail of his beautiful dog, and turned him out of doors, on purpoſe to give them a ſubject for diſcourſe, inſtead of prating of his other actions. For this ſame purpoſe of miſleading the opinions, conjectures, and converſation of the people, I have alſo ſeen ſome women conceal their real affections by ſuch as were counterfeit. Nay, I have ſeen one who has counterfeited ſo long that ſhe has in good earneſt dropped the real and original love, and been

* Plutarch, in the Life of Alchibiades, ſays, this dog coſt him 700 crowns, and that his tail was his greateſt beauty.

cap-

captivated by the feigned one: and by her I found that they who know their affections well placed, are fools to consent to such a disguise. The public reception, and entertainments being reserved for such pretended humble servants, a man may conclude him to be no conjurer if he does not in the end put himself into your place, and send you to his. This is properly to cut out, and make a shoe for another to wear.

A small matter either engages, or disengages the mind.

A little thing disengages and puts us aside; for a small matter engage us. We do not consider subjects, in the gross, and single in themselves: we are smitten with minute and superficial circumstances, or images, and with the insignificant parings of subjects.

Folliculos ut nunc teretes æstate cicadæ
Linquunt ||.

Such as the hollow husks or bags we find
That butterflies in summer leave behind.

Plutarch himself † laments his daughter for the monkey-tricks she played in her infancy. The remembrance of a farewel, a particular action or favour, or of a final recommendation, afflict us. The sight of Cæsar's robe troubled all Rome, which was more than his death had done. The very sound of names ringing in our ears, as, "My poor master; my very good friend; alas! my "dear father; or my sweet daughter," affects us. When those repetitions torment me, and I examine them closely, I find it is no other than a grammatical complaint. The word and tone affect me, as the exclamations of preachers often work more upon their auditories than their arguments, and as we are moved at the pitiful cries of a beast that is killed for our service, without my weighing or penetrating, in the mean while, into the true and solid essence of my subject.

——*his se stimulis dolor ipse lacessit* ‡.

With these incitements grief itself provokes.

These are the grounds of our mourning.

|| Lucret. lib. v. ver. 801, &c. † In a treatise, intituled, A Word of Comfort to his Wife, on the Death of her Daughter, chap. 1.
‡ Lucan. lib. ii. ver. 42.

The

By what trifling objects the desire of life is kept up.

The obstinate continuance of the stone, especially those in my bladder, has sometimes been attended with so long a suppression of urine, even for three or four days together, and brought me so near death, that it would have been a folly to have hoped to escape it, or even so much as to have desired to escape it, considering what I suffer from it cruel attacks. What a monster of cruelty was that emperor, who, among other tortures, which he invented for his criminals *, suffered them to drink as much wine as they could swallow, and then caused their privy members to be tied up so hard that their urine might stop and kill them. Finding myself in that state. I considered by what trifling causes and objects imagination fed my desire of life, of what atoms the weight and difficulty of parting with it was composed in my soul, and to how many frivolous thoughts we give way in so great an affair. A dog, a horse, a book, a glass, and what not, were reckoned in my loss: and others with no less folly, in my opinion, reckoned up in theirs their ambitious hopes, their money, and their science. I look upon death with indifference when I consider it as the end of life universally. I insult over it in the gross, but, when it comes to particulars, it harrows my soul. The tears of a footman, the disposal of my old cloaths, the touch of a friendly hand, a common consolation, discourage me, and sink my spirits. Thus are our souls troubled by the complaints in romance: and the regrets of Dido and Ariadne in Virgil and Catullus, raise a compassion even in those who do not believe them. It is a proof of an obstinate hard heart, never to perceive it moved; as they tell a wonderful story of Polemon, who is said to have not so much as turned pale at the bite of a mad dog, though it tore away the calf of his leg †. Nor is it within the extent of human wisdom, to have so lively and entire a conception of the cause of sorrow, by judgment, as not to be increased by his presence, when the eyes and ears

The privities of criminals tied up to stop their urine.

* Suetonius, in the Life of Tiberius, chap. 62.
† In his Life by Diogenes Laertius, lib. iv. § 17.

are

are witneſſes of it, the parts which are only to be agitated by trifling accidents.

The orator and the comedian touched to the quick by acting their parts tho' in fiction.

Is it reaſon that even the arts themſelves ſhould make an advantage of our natural ſtupidity and weakneſs? An orator, during the farce of his pleading, ſhall be moved by the ſound of his own voice, and his feigned agitations, and ſuffer himſelf to be captivated by the paſſion which he repreſents. He will imprint on himſelf a true and real grief, by means of the part he plays, for the ſake of transferring it to the audience, who are yet leſs affected than himſelf; like thoſe perſons who are hired at funerals, to aſſiſt in the ceremony of mourning, who ſell their tears, and their ſadneſs by weight and meaſure. For though they act in a borrowed ſhape, yet, by adjuſting and habituating their countenance to the occaſion, it is certain that they are often entirely ſwallowed up by it, and immerged in real melancholy. I was one among many other of his friends, who attended the corpſe of M. de Grammont to Soiſſons, from the ſiege of La Fere, where he was killed. I obſerved that in all the places through which we paſſed, we ſet the people a weeping and lamenting by only the ſolemn parade of our convoy, for the name of the deceaſed was not ſo much as known by them. Quintilian* ſays, he had ſeen comedians ſo deeply engaged in a mourning ſcene that they could not help weeping when they went off of the ſtage; and that, having himſelf undertaken to ſtir up a paſſion in another perſon, he eſpouſed it himſelf to ſuch a degree that he not only ſhed tears, but waxed pale, and behaved like a man truly overwhelmed with grief †.

A pleaſant method of diverting one's grief.

In a country, near our mountains, the women act both the prieſt and the clerk; for as they magnify the loſs of the deceaſed huſband by the remembrance of what good and agreeable qualities he had, they, at the very ſame time, make a collection and proclamation of his imperfections, as if they would make themſelves ſome amends, and ſo divert their compaſſion to contempt; and yet, with a much

* Inſtit. Orat. lib. vi. cap. 2. at the end. † Ibid.

better grace than we do, who, at the loſs of a prime acquaintance, ſtrive to give him new and falſe praiſe, and to make him quite another man, when we have loſt ſight of him than he appeared to be when we ſaw him, as if regret was a matter of inſtruction, or that tears, by waſhing our underſtanding, cleared it. For my part, I henceforth quit claim to all favourable characters the world ſhall be diſpoſed to give of me; not becauſe I ſhall be worthy of them, but becauſe I ſhall be dead.

Vain objects of mere imaginations, without reality, ſtrike and determine the human mind.

If any one aſks another, what concern have you in this ſiege? "The intereſt of "example, he will ſay, and of the com- "mon obedience due to my prince; I "aim at no profit from it whatſoever; "and for honour, I know what a ſmall "ſhare of it can redound to ſuch a private man as I "am: I have in this neither paſſion nor quarrel." See him however but the next day, and you will find him quite another man, chafing, and red-hot with rage, in his line of the battle, for the aſſault. It is the glittering of ſo much ſteel, the fire and noiſe of our cannon and drums that has infuſed this freſh rancor and hatred into his veins. A frivolous cauſe you will ſay: how is it a cauſe? There needs none to put the mind in agitation. A mere whimſy, without body and without ſubject, governs and puts it in motion. Let me think of building caſtles in Spain, my imagination ſuggeſts to me conveniencies and pleaſures, with which my ſoul is really pleaſed and delighted. How often do we torment our minds with anger or ſorrow by ſuch ſhadows, and plunge ourſelves in fantaſtic paſſions, which alter us both body and ſoul? What aſtoniſhed, fleering, and confuſed grimaces, do ſuch idle notions excite in our countenances? What ſallies and agitations do they create, both of the members and the voice? Does it not ſeem that this individual man has falſe notions from a crowd of others, with whom he has dealings, or ſome devil within him that perſecutes him? Inquire of yourſelf where is the object of this change? Is there any thing in nature, man excepted, which nothing ſuſtains, over which no-

thing has any power?* Cambyſes, for only having dreamt in his ſleep that his brother was to be one day king of Perſia, put him to death, though he was a brother that he loved, and always confided in †. Ariſtodemus, king of the Meſſenians, killed himſelf, out of a fancy that a certain howling of his dogs was an ill omen ‖. And king Midas did the ſame, becauſe he had dreamt ſome diſagreeable dream ‡. It is taking life at its juſt value to abandon it for a dream. Hear nevertheleſs how the ſoul triumphs over the wretchedneſs and weakneſs of the body, and its being liable to all injuries and alterations: and truly it has reaſon to ſpeak thus of it.

O prima infelix fingenti terra Prometheo!
Ille parùm cauti pectoris egit opus.
Corpora diſponens, mentem non vidit in arte
Recta animi primùm debuit eſſe via §.

Oh! 'twas for man a moſt unhappy day
When raſh Prometheus formed him out of clay!
In his attempt, the heedleſs architect
Did indiſcreetly the main thing neglect.
In framing bodies he had not the art
To form the mind, the firſt and nobleſt part.

CHAP. V.

On ſome Verſes of Virgil.

Gay reflections neceſſary in old age.

USEFUL meditation is the more embarraſſing and burdenſome by being copious and ſolid. Vice, death, poverty,

* The Engliſh tranſlator, (Mr. Cotton) for want of having ſeen Angelier's edition of Montaigne in 4to, anno 1588, has miſtaken the ſenſe of this paſſage, by wording it thus, "Is there any thing but us in nature, but ſubſiſting nullity, over which it has power?" A phraſe unintelligible, and only quoted leſt many of his readers ſhould be led into the ſame miſtake. † Herodot. lib. iii. p. 196. ‖ Plutarch's Treatiſe of Superſtition, chap. 9. ‡ Id ibid. § Propert lib. iii. el. 5 ver. 7.

and

and distempers, are subjects that are both grave and grievous. It is necessary for the mind to be well furnished with the means of substaining and combating evils, and instructed in the rules of a good life, and a right belief; and it should be often rouzed and excercised in this noble study. But, in an ordinary soul, this must be by relaxing sometimes, and with moderation; for, if continually bent to it, it will grow stupid. In my youth I found it necessary to put myself in mind, and to solicit myself to keep to my duty. Gaiety and health, they say, do not agree quite so well with these serious and wise discourses. I am at this present time in another state. The terms of old age only give me too much warnings, preach to me, and make me grow wiser. From an excessive sprightliness, I am sunk into excessive gravity, which is worse. For that reason I now suffer my fancy to run wild for the purpose, and sometimes employ my mind in wanton and juvenile thoughts, with which it diverts itself. I am of late but too reserved, too grave, and too sedate. Every day, at these years, admonishes me to be cool and temperate. This body of mine avoids irregularity, and dreads it. It is now its turn to guide my mind towards a reformation. This too governs in its turn, and more roughly and imperiously than the other. It does not let me rest an hour, either sleeping or waking, from some instruction concerning death, patience, and repentance. I now deny myself temperance, as I did formerly pleasure; for it draws me too far back, and even to a degree of stupidity. Now I would fain be my own master in every respect. Even wisdom has its excess, and has as much need of moderation as folly; therefore lest I should wither, dry up, and over-burden myself with prudence, in the intervals, which my infirmities allow me,

Mens intenta suis ne siet usque matis ‡.

Lest that my mind should evermore be bent,
And fix'd on subjects full of discontent.

‡ Ovid de Trist. lib. iv. eleg. 1. ver. 4.

I gently decline it, and turn away my eyes from the ſtormy and cloudy ſky that I have before me; which, thanks be to God, I conſider without fear, but not without meditation and debate; and amuſe myſelf with the remembrance of the days of my youth,

——*animus quod perdidit, optat,*
Atque in præteritâ ſe totus imagine verſat ‡.

The mind longs to regain what it has loſt,
And by things paſt is totally ingroſs'd.

Was it not the meaning of Janus's double face, to ſignify that childhood ſhould look forward, and old age backward? Let years drag me on as they may, but it ſhall be backward As long as my eyes are able to review that beautiful ſeaſon, which is expired, I now and then turn them that way. Though it is gone out of my blood-veſſels, yet I am not willing to root the image of it out of my memory.

————*hoc eſt,*
Vivere bis, vitâ poſſe priore frui ‖.

The man lives twice, who can the gift retain
Of mem'ry, to enjoy paſt life again.

Old men ſhould be preſent at the paſtimes and exerciſes of the youth.

Plato preſcribes to old men to be preſent at the exerciſes, dancings, and ſports of youth, that they may be pleaſed to ſee in others that activity and beauty of the body, which in themſelves is no more; and that they may recal to mind the gracefulneſs and bloom of that flouriſhing ſtage of life: and he requires that, in thoſe recreations, they aſcribe the honour of the victory to the young man who has given the beſt, and the moſt diverſion and joy to the company. I uſed formerly to mark dull gloomy days as extraordinary; thoſe are now my ordinary ones, and the extraordinary are the ſerene, bright days. I am

‡ Petronius, p. 90. of the Paris edition, 1587.
‖ Martial lib. x. epig. 23, ver. 7.

ready

ready to leap out of my ſkin for joy, as much as if I had received a new favour when I had not a right to one. With whatever vain fancies I pleaſe myſelf, I cannot ſometimes force one poor ſmile from this wretched body of mine. I am only merry in conceit, and, as in a dream, to divert by ſtratagem the chagrin of old age: but ſurely it would require another remedy than a dream. A weak ſtruggle of art againſt nature. It is a great folly to lengthen and anticipate human inconveniencies, as every body does. I had rather be old, though it be for a leſs time than to be old before I am really ſo ‖. I ſeize on even the leaſt occaſions of pleaſure that come in my way. I know well, by hear-ſay, ſeveral ſorts of pleaſures, which are prudent, manly and honourable; but opinion has not power enough over me to give me an appetite for them. I covet not ſo much to have them gallant, magnificent and pompous, as I do to have them delightful, eaſy to come at, and ready at hand. *A natura diſcedimus: populo nos damus, nulliu rei bono autori* ¶; "we abandon "nature to follow the popular taſte, from which no "good comes." My philoſophy is in action, in natural and preſent practice, very little in fancy. What a pleaſure ſhould I take in playing at cob-nut, or whipping a top!

And take every opportunity of enjoying pleaſure.

Non penebat enim rumores ante ſalutem †.

——He was too wiſe
Idle reports before his health to prize.

Pleaſure is a quality of very little ambition. It thinks itſelf rich enough, without any mixture of reputation with it, and is beſt pleaſed in obſcurity. That young man who ſhould pretend to a palate for wine and ſauces, ought to be whipped. There was nothing which I leſs knew

‖ Cicero's Treatiſe of old Age, ch. 10. ¶ Senec. epiſt. 99. † This is a very pleaſant application of a grave verſe, quoted out of Ennius by Cicero de Offic. lib. i. cap. 24. where that poet ſpeaking of Fabius Maximus, ſays, that while he was acting for the public good, he was indifferent to every thing that was ſaid at Rome to run down his conduct.

and valued, but now I learn it. I am very much ashamed of it, but what should I do? I am more ashamed and vexed at the occasions that prompt me to it. It is for us to doat and tell old wives stories, but young men must mind their reputation, and make a genteel figure. Youth is advancing into the world, and into credit. We are going out of it. *Sibi arma, sibi æquos, sibi hastas, sibi pilam, sibi natationes, et cursus habeant; nobis senibus, ex lusionibus multis, talos relinquant et tesseras* *; "let them "reserve to themselves arms, horses, spears, clubs, tennis, swimming, and racing; and, of the many sports, "leave dice and draughts, and the chess-board, to us old "men." The laws themselves send us to our houses. I can do no less in favour of this wretched state into which I am pushed by my age, than to furnish it with play-things and amusements, as they do children, into whose class we are also relapsed. Both wisdom and folly will have enough to do to support and relieve me, by alternate offices, in this calamity of age.

Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem †.
Short folly mix with graver cares.

I also avoid the slightest attacks; for what would not have scratched me formerly, now pierce me through and through. My constitution begins naturally to be so crazy; *in fragili corpore odiosa omnis offensis est*; "to a "weak constitution every injury is hateful."

Mensque pati durum sustinet ægra nihil ‡.
And a sick mind nothing that's harsh can bear.

I was always of so delicate a constitution that the least injury would hurt me; and I am now become more tender, and more exposed on all sides.

Et minimæ vires frangere quassa valent ¶.

A crack'd pitcher is soon broke.

* Cic. de Senect. cap. 16. † Hor. lib. iv. ode 12. ver. 27. ‡ Ovid de Ponto, lib. i. eleg. 5. ver. 18. ¶ Ovid. Trist. lib. iii. el. 11. ver. 22.

My

My judgment restrains me from repining and grumbling at the inconveniencies I suffer by the law of nature; but it does not take away my feeling. Having no other view but a merry life, I would run from one end of the world to the other in quest of one year of pleasant and jocund tranquility. I have enough of that sort which is gloomy and stupid, but it makes me sleepy and brainsick. I am not satisfied with it. If there be any person, any good company in country or city, in France or elsewhere, resident or travelling, who can like my humour, and whose humours I can like, let them but give a whistle, and I will go and furnish them with essays fat and lean.

The mind too closely attached to the body.

Since it is the prerogative of the mind to rescue itself from old age, I advise mine by all means to do it. Mean time let it wax green and flourish like mistletoe upon a dead tree. I fear however it is a traitor, because it has contracted so close a fraternity with the body, that it leaves me at every turn to follow the call of that. I flatter it, and deal with it apart, but in vain. I try, to no purpose, to break the connection, by laying Seneca and Catullus before it, and the representation of court ladies and royal masks. If its companion has the cholic, the mind seems also to be afflicted with it. Even the faculties that are peculiarly and properly its own, cannot then lift themselves up, but plainly find themselves cramped. There is no sprightliness in its production, if there be none at the same time in the body.

The health and vigour of the body is the cause of the extraordinary sallies of the mind.

Our teachers are in the wrong who, while they are in quest of the causes of the extraordinary transports of the mind, attribute it to a divine extasy, to love, to a martial fierceness, poetry and wine, have denied the share of it due to health. A boiling, vigourous, full, and idle state of health, such as formerly the verdure of youth and indolence furnished me with by fits; that fire of gaiety raises lively clear flashes in the mind, beyond our natural light, which are accompanied with the most fantastical, if not the most desperate enthusiasm. Now it is no wonder if a contrary state of

body ſink and clog my ſpirits, and produce a contrary effect.

Ad nullum conſurgit opus cum corpore languet * :

The man whoſe body languiſhing doth lie,
Cannot to any work himſelf apply.

And yet would have me obliged to it, as it pretends, for my oppoſing this agreement much more than is common with mankind to do; at leaſt, while we have a truce, let us baniſh difficulties and miſchiefs from our commerce.

† Dum licet, *obductæ ſolvatur fronte ſenectus* ‡.

Let even the wrinkles of old age be ſmooth'd.

Montaigne's character of wiſdom.

‖ *Tetrica ſunt amœnanda jocularibus*; "four chagrin muſt be ſweetened with "jocularity." I like wiſdom that is gay and courteous, and fly from all crabbedneſs and auſterity, having a ſuſpicion of every grim countenance, *Triſtemque vultus tetrici arrogantiam.*

Et habet triſtis quoque turba cynædos §.

A diſmal face oft hides a vicious heart.

I am ſincerely of Plato's opinion, who ſays, that good or ill tempers are a great indication of the goodneſs or badneſs of the heart. Socrates had one ſettled countenance, but it was ſerene and ſmiling; not a ſettled gloomineſs, like that of old Craſſus, who was never ſeen to laugh. Virtue is a quality pleaſant and gay.

Montaigne's opinion of thoſe who ſhall condemn the freedom of his writings.

I know very well that few will quarrel with the freedom of my writings, who have not more reaſon to quarrel with the freedom of their own thoughts. It is very humorous to play the ſevere critic on the writings of Plato, and to paſs ſlightly over his

* Corn. Gall. eleg. ii. ver. 125.
‡ Hor. Epod. lib. ode 13. ver. 7.
† In the original it is "et decet."
‖ Sidonius Apollinaris, lib. i. ep. 9. Ironio, towards the end.
§ Mart. lib. vii ver. 9.

pre-

pretended connections with Phœdo, Dion, Stella, and Archeanassa. *Non pudeat dicere, quod non pudet sentire*; "Let no man be ashamed to speak what he is not "ashamed to think." I hate a froward pensive temper, which skims over the pleasures of life, and seizes and feeds upon its misfortunes, like the flies that cannot stick to a body that is well polished and sleek, but fasten and settle upon such as are rough and knotty; and like the cupping-glasses that only suck and draw the bad blood.

Of the liberty he takes to say all that he dares to do.

As for the rest, I have made it a rule to myself to dare to say all that I dare to do, and I am even displeased at thoughts that will not bear the light. The worst of my actions and qualities do not appear to me so foul as I find it foul and base not to dare to own them. Every one is discreet in the confession, and men ought to be so in the action. The boldness of doing ill is in some measure recompensed and restrained by the boldness of confessing it. Whoever will oblige himself to tell the whole, should oblige himself to do nothing that he must be forced to conceal. God grant that this excessive liberty I take, may draw men to freedom superior to those sneaking squeamish virtues that spring from our imperfections; and that they may be brought to the standard of reason at the expence of my intemperance. A man must see and study his vice in order to reveal it: they who conceal it from others, commonly conceal it from themselves, and do not think they commit sin secretly enough, if they themselves see it. They withdraw and disguise it from their own consciences. *Quare vitia sua nemo confitetur? Quia etiam nunc in illis est: somnium narrare vigilantis est* †; "why does no man "confess his vices? Because he yet continues in them: "it is for a man who is awake to tell his dream." The diseases of the body are better known by being increased. We find that to be the gout, which we called a rheum, or a strain. The distempers of the soul, the stronger they are, keep themselves the more obscure; and the most diseased have the least feeling of them. We must

† Seneca, epist. 53.

there-

therefore often bring them to the light with an unrelenting hand, and open and tear them from the bottom of our hearts. As in doing good, so in doing evil, the mere confession of it is sometimes a satisfaction. Is there any deformity in doing amiss that can excuse us from confessing it? It is so great a pain to me to dissemble, that I avoid being trusted with another person's secrets, for I have not the courage to disavow my knowledge of them. I can conceal it, but deny it I cannot, without great pains and vexation. To be very secret, a man must be so by nature, not by obligation. It is of little worth, in the service of a prince, to be secret, if a man be not also a liar. If he, who asked Thales, the Milesian, whether he ought solemnly to deny that he had committed uncleanness, had applied himself to me, I should have told him that he ought not; for I take lying to be a worse crime than the other. Thales advised him to quite the contrary, bidding him swear *, in order to shield the greater crime by the less: nevertheless this counsel was not so much a choice, as a multiplication of vice; upon which let us say this, by the by, that we deal well with a conscientious man, when we propose to him some difficulty to counterbalance a vice; but when we shut him up betwixt two vices he is put to a hard choice, as was the case of Origen, when it was put to his choice, either to turn idolater, or to suffer himself to be carnally abused by a great Æthiopian slave that was brought to him. He submitted to the first condition, and, as it is said, vi-

The hard choice put to Origen.

* Here Montaigne makes Thales say the very contrary to what he really said; and this, by mistaking the sense of Diogenes Laertius, the author whom he must have consulted for the answer: "a man," says Diogenes, "who had committed adultery, having asked Thales, whether "he might not deny it upon oath?" Thales made answer, "But is not "perjury even a worse crime than adultery?" See Diogenes' Life of Thales, lib. i. sect. 26. Perhaps Montaigne was deceived by some edition of this author, where the note of interrogation was omitted after the last word, which indeed is an omission that I find in Henry Wetstein's edition, which, excepting that, is very correct. But I am more inclined to think that, Montaigne's memory, so wonderfully apt to fail him, as he himself confesses, has here played him a scurvy trick; for whatever construction he put upon the words of Diogenes Laertius, it cannot be thence inferred that Thales advised the man to take an oath for the sake of shielding the greater evil by the less.

ciously. Yet those women of our time, who protest that they had rather burden their consciences with ten men than one mass, would be allowed to be women of taste, considering their error. If it be an indiscretion so to publish errors, there is no great danger of its being made a precedent and practice. For Aristo said, that the winds, which men most feared, were those that expose them. We must tuck up this ridiculous rag, which hides our manners. They send their consciences to the stews, and at the same time keep a starched countenance. They espouse the laws of ceremony, and there fix their duty; so that neither can injustice complain of incivility, nor malice of indiscretion. It is pity that every bad man is not also a fool; and that decency should be a cloak for his vice. Such plasterings are only proper for a good substantial wall, which it is worth while to preserve and white-wash.

Why Montaigne chose to be confessed in public.

In complaisance to the Hugonots, who condemn our auricular private confession, I confess myself in public religiously and purely. As St. Augustin, Origen, and Hippocrates, published the errors of their opinions, I also discover those of my manners. I am all agog to make myself known, and care not to how many, provided it be truly; or, to say better, I long for nothing, but I cannot bear to be taken for what I am not by those who happen to know my name. He that does every thing for honour and glory, what does he think to gain by shewing himself to the public under a vizor, and by concealing what he really is from the knowledge of the people? Commend a crooked fellow for his fine stature, he has reason to take it for an affront. If you are a coward, and yet honoured for being a man of valour, is it you whom they mean? They take you for another person. I should be as fond of that man, who pleases himself with the compliments and congees that are made to him, as if he were the head of the company, when he is one of the meanest in the train. Archelaus, king of Macedonia, walking along the street, a person threw water on him, for which his attendants said, he ought to punish him.

him. "Nay, but," said the king, "he did not throw "the water upon me, but on the man he took me to be." To one who informed Socrates, that the people spoke ill so him, "Not at all," said he, "for there is nothing in "me of what they say." As for my part, whoever should commend me for being a good pilot, or very modest, or very chaste, I should owe him no thanks. And in like manner, whoever should call me traitor, robber, or drunkard, I should be as little offended. They who do not know themselves, may feed their vanity with false applause; but not I, who see myself, and look into the very bottom of my heart, and very well know what belongs to me. I am content to be less commended, provided I am better known. I might be reckoned a wise man in such a sort of wisdom as I take to be folly. I am chagrined that my Essays serve the ladies only as a common moveable, or furniture for the hall. This chapter will advance me to the closet. I love a little private conversation with them, for that which is public, is without favour and without savour. In farewels we are warmed with a more than ordinary affection for the things we take leave of. I take my final leave of this world's joys. These are our last embraces.

Why the action which brings us into the world, is excluded from serious and regular discourses?

But, to come to my subject, what is the reason that the act of generation, an action so natural, so necessary, and so justly the men's prerogative, what has it done that people dare not speak of it without a blush, and that it should be excluded from all serious and regular discourse? We boldly pronounce the words "kill, rob, betray," but the other we dare not mention so as to be heard. Does it mean that the less we exhale of the fact in speech, we have the more authority to swell it in thought? For it is happy that the words which are least spoken or written, and most kept in, are the best understood, and the most generally known. Every age, all ranks, know them as well as they do bread. They are imprinted in every one, without being expressed, and without voice and form. And the sex that is bound to say least of it, does it most.

It

It is an action which we have lost in the sanctuary of silence, out of which it is a crime to force it, instead of accusing and judging it; neither dare we to lash it, but by periphrasis, and in picture. A great favour to a criminal to be so detestable that justice reckons it unjust to touch and see him, and to be obliged to the severity of his condemnation for his liberty and security. Is it not the case here as it is with books, which sell and spread the more for being suppressed? For my part, I am ready to take Aristotle at his word, who says that bashfulness is an ornament to youth, but a reproach to old age. These verses are the doctrine of the old school, to which I adhere much rather than to the modern, as its virtues appear to me greater, and its vices less.

* *Ceux qui par trop fuyant Venus estrivent*
Faillant autant que ceux qui trop la suivent.

They err no less, who Venus too must shun,
Than those who to her altars always run.

Tu dea, tu rerum naturam sola gubernas,
Nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras
Exoritur, neque fit lætum, nec amabile quicquam †.

Thou deity, by whom all nature's sway'd,
Without whose power nothing can spring to light,
Or beautiful, or lovely to the sight.

Pallas and the Muses are in a great connection with Venus.

I cannot imagine who could set Pallas and the Muses at variance with Venus, and make them cold towards love; for I know no deities that tally better, or are more indebted to one another. He who will not own that the Muses have amorous imaginations, will rob them of the best entertainment they have, and of the noblest subject of their composition; and whoever shall deprive love of the communication and service of poetry, will disarm it of its best weapons. By these means they charge Pallas, the god of familiarity and benevolence,

* Verses Amyot's translation of Plutarch, chap. 5.
† Lucret. lib. i. ver. 22.

and the Muſes, who are the tutelar deities of humanity and juſtice, with the vice of ingratitude and diſreſpect. I have not been ſo long caſhiered from the ſuit and ſervice of that deity, but my memory ſtill retains its ſtrength and power.

Agnoſco veteris veſtigia flammæ *.

Of my old flame there yet remain ſome ſparks.

Nec mihi deficiat calor hic hyemantibus annis.

I have ſome heat left in my winter age.

Qual l'alto Egeo, perche aquilone o noto
Ceſſi, che tutto prima il volſe e ſcoſſe,
Non s' achetta ei però, ma'l ſono e'l moto
Ritien de l' onde anco agitate e groſſe †.

As when a ſtorm, which late with furious blaſt,
Th' Ægean ocean heav'd, at length is paſt,
While the high waves ſubſide into a plain,
Soft undulations move along the main.

But, as far as I underſtand of the matter, the abilities and valour of this god are more lively and animated, by the painting of poetry, than in their own eſſence.

Et verſus digitos habet ‖.

And there's harmony in verſe to charm a Venus.

Poetry repreſents a kind of air more amorous than love itſelf. Venus is not ſo beautiful, ſtark-naked, alive, and panting, as ſhe is here in Virgil.

Dixerat, et niveis hinc atque hinc diva lacertis
Cunctantem amplexu molli fovet : ille repente
Accepit ſolitam flammam, notuſque medullas
Intravit calor, et labefacta per oſſa cucurrit,

* Virg. Æneid. lib. iv. ver. 23. † Taſſo's Gieruſalem liber. canto 12. ſtanza 63. ‖ Juv. ſat. 6. ver. 197.

Non

Non secus atque olim tonitru cum rupta coruſco
Ignea rima micans percurrit lumine nimbos,
——— *ea verbaloquutus,*
Optatos dedit amplexus, placidumque petivit
Conjugis infuſus gremio per membra ſoporem *.

She ſaid, and round him threw her ſnow white-arms,
And warm'd him, wav'ring, with a ſoft embrace.
He quickly felt the wonted flame, which pierc'd
Swift to his marrow thro' his melting bones;
As when in thunder, lanc'd along the ſky,
A ſtreak of fire runs ſtreaming thro' the clouds.
* * * * * * * * *
——— This having ſaid,
After the wiſh'd embrace, he ſunk to reſt,
Softly reclin'd, on his fair conſort's breaſt.

The tranſports of love baniſhed from marriage; and why.

All the fault I find in theſe lines, is that he has repreſented her a little too much in rapture for a married Venus. In this diſcreet partnerſhip the appetites are not uſually ſo wanton, but more grave and dull. Love hates that its votaries ſhould be ſwayed by any motive foreign to itſelf, and is but cool in ſuch familiarities as are formed and maintained under any other title, as marriage is, wherein it is reaſonable to think that kindred and the dowry ſhould have as much, or more weight, than comelineſs and beauty. Men, ſay what they will, do not marry for themſelves; they marry as much, or more, for the ſake of poſterity and their families. The intereſt and uſefulneſs of marriage concerns our deſcendants far beyond our time; and therefore I like the way of negociating it by a third hand, and by the judgment of others, rather than by that of the parties that are to be married: and how oppoſite is all this to the conventions of love! It is a kind of inceſt, as I think I have ſaid elſewhere, to exert the efforts and extravagancies of an amorous licentiouſneſs in that venerable, and ſacred alliance. A man, ſays Ariſtotle, ſhould accoſt his wife

* Æneid. lib. viii. ver. 387, 392, 404, 405, 406.

with

with prudence and modesty, lest, by dealing with her too wantonly, the pleasure should make her exceed the bounds of reason. What he says with regard to conscience, the physicians say with regard to health, that pleasure excessively hot, lascivious, and frequent, corrupts the seed, and hinders conception. But it is said, on the contrary, that to supply a languishing congress as that is is naturally, with a due and prolific heat, a man should offer at it but seldom, and at notable intervals.

‡ *Quô rapiat sitiens Venerem interiusque recondat* §.

I see no marriages that sooner miscarry, or are disturbed, than those which are spurred on by beauty and amorous desires. The foundations should be more solid and constant, and they should be proceeded in with circumspection. This furious ardour in them is good for nothing.

That love is no more to be found in the married state than virtue in nobility.

They who think to do honour to the married state, by joining love to it, are methinks like those who, in favour of virtue, hold that nobility is nothing else but virtue. They are indeed somewhat a-kin, but they differ very much; and therefore to confound their names and titles is doing wrong to both. Nobility is a fine quality, and with reason introduced; but, forasmuch as it is a quality dependent on another, and which may fall to a man who is vicious and good for nothing, it is far below virtue in estimation. If it be virtue, it is a virtue that is artificial and apparent, depending on time and chance, differing in form according to the various countries, living and mortal, without any source more than the river Nile, genealogical and common, of succession and semblance, drawn by a consequence that is a very weak one. Knowledge, power, bounty, beauty, riches, and all other qualities, fall into communication and commerce, but this is consummated in itself, and of no use to the service of another. There was proposed to one of our kings the choice of two competitors for a certain office,

‡ Montaigne has explained this verse enough before he quoted it.
§ Virg. Geo. lib. iii. ver. 137.

of

of whom the one was a gentleman, and the other was not. The king ordered that, without respect to quality, they should chuse him who had the most merit; but that when the worth of the competitors should appear to be intirely equal, then they should have respect to nobility. This was justly to give it its due rank. A young man unknown coming to Antigonus, to solicit that he might succeed to the post of his deceased father, a person of worth; he said to him, "In such preferments as these," my friend, "I do not so much regard the noble extraction of my soldiers as their prowess *." And indeed it ought not to fare with soldiers as it did with the king of Sparta's officers, trumpets, minstrels, cooks, &c. who were succeeded in their offices by their children, how ignorant soever, in preference to those who had more experience in the business.

To what rank the nobility are promoted in the kingdom of Calicut.

The people of Calicut exalt their nobility above the human species. They are prohibited marriage, and every employment, but what is military. They may have as many concubines as they desire, and the women as many panders without being jealous of one another: but it is a capital, and unpardonable crime to couple with a person of a meaner condition than themselves: nay, they think themselves polluted if they are but touched by one passing along; and, as if their nobility was strangely injured and wounded by it, they kill such as come but a little too near them; insomuch that those who are not noble are obliged to call out as they go, like the gondoliers of Venice, at the turnings of streets, for fear of running foul of one another; and the nobility command them to step aside to what part they please. By this means the nobility avoid what they reckon a perpetual ignominy, and the others certain death. No length of time, no favour of the prince, no office, or virtue, or riches, can make a plebeian become noble; to which this custom contributes, that marriages are prohibited betwixt families of different trades, insomuch that one descended from a shoemaker may not marry a carpenter; and the parents are obliged to train up their children exactly to

* Plutarch of false modesty, ch. 19.

the father's buſineſs, and to no other; by which means the diſtinction and continuation of their fortune is kept up.

The idea of a good marriage.

A good marriage, is there be ſuch, rejects the company and conditions of love: it endeavours to diſplay thoſe of friendſhip. It is a ſweet ſociety of life, full of conſtancy, truſt, and an infinite number of uſeful and ſolid offices, and mutual obligations. No woman that has a true taſte of it, or

———*Optato quam junxit lumine tæda* *,

who is married to her liking, would be willing to be in the ſtead of a miſtreſs to her huſband. If ſhe be lodged in his affection, as a wife, ſhe is then lodged much more honourably and ſecurely. When his love is ſet upon, and importunate for another object, let any one but then aſk him on which he had rather a diſgrace ſhould fall, on his wife or on his miſtreſs, whoſe misfortune would trouble him moſt, and to which of them he wiſhes moſt grandeur; ſuch queſtions admit of no doubt in a good marriage.

A good marriage, the moſt happy ſtate in human ſociety.

That we ſee ſo few good marriages is the greater token of their value; if well formed and adjuſted, there is not a more beautiful ſcene in human ſociety. We cannot do without it, and yet we are continually running it down. Juſt ſo it is in the cages, where the birds that are within are mad to get out, and thoſe that are without would fain get in. Socrates, being aſked whether it was moſt commodious, to take a wife or not, made anſwer, "Let a man do which he will, he will repent of it ‡." It is a contract, to which the common ſaying, *Homo homini, aut deus, aut lupus*, "man to man is either a God, or a devil," may very fitly be applied. There muſt be a concurrence of a great many qualities to conſtitute it. It is in this age fitter for mean and vulgar ſouls, which are not ſo much under the influence of diverſions, curioſity, and idleneſs.

* Catul. de Coma Berenices Carm. 64. ver. 79. ‡ Diog. Laert. lib. ii. §. 33.

Such

Such wild humours as mine, which hates all sorts of connexion and restraint, are not so proper for it.

Et mihi dulce magis resoluto vivere collo *.

For liberty to me is far more sweet
Than all the pleasures of the nuptial sheet.

Why Montaigne married, though very ill disposed for it.

Might I have had my will, I would not have married even wisdom itself, if she would have had me. But we may say what we please; we are carried away by custom, and the common practice of life. Most of my actions are governed by example, not by choice: and yet I did not comply with it properly. I was led and carried to it by strange occasions. For not only things that are most inconvenient, but the most deformed, the most vicious, and those to which we have the greatest aversion, may become acceptable by certain conditions and accidents: so vain is any human state. In reality, I was persuaded to marriage at a time when I was worse prepared for it, and more averse to it than I am now, that I have tried it. And as great a libertine as I am taken to be, I have in truth observed the marriage-articles more strictly than I either promised or expected. It is in vain to kick when a man is once fettered. A man ought to use his liberty sparingly; but after he has submitted to the marriage tye he must confine himself within the laws of the common duty, at least endeavour it all he can.

Marriage ought to be exempt from hatred and contempt.

They who enter into this contract with a view to behave in it with hatred and contempt, act unjustly, as well as unhandsomely and equally harsh and injurious is that fine rule which I find passes from hand to hand among the women, like a sacred oracle.

Sers ton mary comme ton maistre,
Et t'en garde comme d'un traistre.

Serve thy husband like a waiter,
But guard thyself as from a traitor.

* Corn. Gall. eleg. 1. ver. 6.

Which is as much as to say, behave to him with a constrained, inimical, and distrustful reverence, which is a style of war and defiance. I am too mild for such rugged designs. To say the truth, I am not yet arrived to that perfection of cunning and complaisance, as to confound reason with injustice, and to ridicule every rule and order that does not agree with my appetite. Because I hate superstition I do not immediately run into irreligion. If a man does not always perform his duty, he ought at least always to love and acknowledge it. There is treachery in the marriage contract, if the affection of the parties be not mutual. We will now proceed.

How Virgil could think a marriage of free choice to be without fidelity.

Our poet represents a marriage full of harmony and good agreement, in which however there is not much fidelity. Did he mean to say that it is not impossible for a person to yield to the importunities of love and yet reserve some duty towards marriage; and that it may be injured without being totally broken? A footman my happen to ride in his master's boots, and yet not hate him. Beauty, opportunity, and destiny (for destiny has also a hand in it)

——fatum est in partibus illis
Quas sinus abscondit: nam si tibi sidera cessent
Nil faciet longi mensura incognita nervi *.

Fate, which the whole world rules, exerts its spite,
Ev'n in the parts conceal'd from common sight:
And if the stars to favour you should fail,
Your furniture of lust will not avail.

may have attached her to a stranger; yet not so intirely perhaps but she may have some link of love that still holds her to her husband. They are two designs, which have distinct paths without being confounded. A woman may yield to a man, whom she would by no means chuse to marry; I do not say from a dislike to his circumstances, but even to his person. Few men have made a wife of a mistress, but they have repented it: and, even in the other world, what an unhappy life does Jupiter lead with

* Juv. sat. ver. 32.

his,

his, whom he at first intrigued with, and enjoyed as a mistress? This is what they call disgracing, or undervaluing a thing, in order the sooner to obtain it. I have, in my time, known an instance where love has been shamefully and dishonestly cured by marriage. The considerations are too widely different. We love two things, which are not only different, but contrary without any impediment. Isocrates said, that the city of Athens was liked just in the same manner as the ladies of pleasure are. Every body loved to take a turn thither, and to pass away his time, but no body liked it so well as to be wedded to it; that is to say, to settle there, and make it his home. I have been vexed to see husbands hate their wives, only because they do them wrong. We should not however love them the less for our own faults; they should at least, upon the score of repentance and compassion, be dearer to us.

Difference betwixt marriage and love.

They are ends that are different, and yet somewhat compatible. Marriage has for its share, profit, justice, honour, and constancy; a flat, but more universal pleasure. Love is founded on pleasure only, and has it in truth more ticklish, lively, and acute; a pleasure inflamed by the difficulty of attaining it. There must needs be a sting and smart in it. It is no longer love if it be without darts and fire. The bounty of the ladies is too profuse in the married state, and blunts the point of affection and desire: to escape which inconvenience, do but see what pains Lycurgus and Plato take in their laws.

The severe laws imposed by the men upon the women before the latter gave their consent to them.

The women are not at all to blame, when they refuse the rules of life that are introduced into the world, forasmuch as they were made by the men, without their consent. There is naturally a contention and brawling betwixt them and us. The strictest agreement we have with them is even mixed with tumult and tempest. In the opinion of our author we deal inconsiderately with them in this. After we have discovered that they are, without comparison, more capable and ardent in the feats of love than we are, and

that the prieſt of old teſtified as much, who had been one while a man, and then a woman.

Venus huic erat utraque nota *.

Tireſias had both ſexes try'd.

Likewiſe, after we have learnt from their own mouths the proof that was given of the truth of this by an emperor and an empreſs of Rome, who lived at different times, and were both famous for their ſuperior atchievements upon this occaſion; he for deflowering in one night ten Sarmatian virgins, that were his captives; and ſhe for having really had twenty-five bouts in one night, changing her man according to her neceſſity and her fancy.

——adhuc ardens rigidæ tentigine vulvæ,
Et laſſata viris, nondum ſatiata receſſit †.

Still burning with the rage of furious luſt,
Tir'd with enjoyment, but unquenched her thirſt.

And, conſidering the quarrel that happened once in Catalonia betwixt a man and his wife, wherein the latter complaining of his too frequent addreſſes to her (not that I think ſo many as made her uneaſy, for I believe no miracles except religious ones) as, under that pretext, to curtail and curb in this which is the very fundamental act of marriage, the authority of the huſbands over their wives, and to ſhew that their frowardneſs and ill nature go beyond the nuptial bed, and ſpurn under foot the very charms and pleaſures of Venus the huſband made anſwer, like an unnatural brute as he was, that on faſt-days he could not content himſelf with leſs than ten courſes. Upon this came out a remarkable decree of the queen of Arragon; by which, after the mature deliberation of council, this good queen, to give a rule and example to all future times of the moderation and modeſty required in lawful marriage, appointed the number of ſix in any one day to be a legal and neceſſary ſtint; releaſing and

* Ovid Metam. lib. iii. fab. 3. ver 23. † Juv. ſat. 6. ver. 135.

quit-

quiting very much of the necessity and desire of her sex, for the sake, she said, of establishing an easy, and consequently a permanent and unchangeable form; whereupon the doctors cry out, what the devil must be the female appetite and concupiscence, since their reason, their reformation, and their virtue are taxed at such a rate, considering the different judgment of our appetites? For Solon, the patron of the law-school *, only taxed us at three times a month, that this conjugal commerce might not fail. After having, I say, both believed and preached this, we go so far as to injoin them continency for their peculiar portion, and upon the most rigorous penalties.

Men give themselves a loose to the passion of love, and severely forbid it at the same time to the women.

Though there is no passion more hard to contend with than this, we require that the women alone should resist it; not barely as a vice, but as an execrable abomination, worse than irreligion, or parricide; and yet we fall into it without blame and reproach. Even those of us, who have endeavoured to master this passion, have acknowledged how difficult, or rather impossible it is to subdue, weaken, and cool the body by the use of material remedies. We, on the contrary, desire constitutions that are sound, vigorous, in good plight, well fed, and chaste at the same time, that is both hot and cold; for marriage, which we say was injoined us to hinder them from burning, is little refreshment to them according to our behaviour. If the women take a man, the vigour of whose age is still boiling, he will be proud of spreading it elsewhere.

Sit tandem pudor aut eamus in jus
Multis mentula millibus redempta,
Non est hæc tua, Basse, vendidisti †.

Bassus! for shame at length give over,
Or I to justice must my cause resign;

* Plutarch in his treatise, intitled, Ἐρωτικὸς, of Love, p. 769 tom. ii. the Paris edition in 1624. † Martial. lib. xii. epig. 99. ver. 10.

The goods with which you play the rover,
Were dearly bought, and are no longer thine.

The philoſopher Polemon * was juſtly proſecuted by his wife for ſowing in a barren field the ſeed that was due to a fruitful one. If, on the other hand, they chuſe decayed men they will be in a worſe condition in marriage than maids and widows. We think them well provided becauſe they have a man always with them; juſt as the Romans thought Clodia Læta, a veſtal virgin, to have been violated becauſe Caligula approached her, though it was affirmed, that he did no more than approached her. But, on the contrary, we by this add to their neceſſity, foraſmuch as the conteſt and company of any man whatſoever rouzes their deſire, which, in ſolitude would be more quiet. And it is likely that it was in order to render their chaſtity the more meritorious by this circumſtance and conſideration, that Boleſlaus and his wife Kinge, the ſovereigns of Poland, united in a vow of chaſtity, when in bed together on their very wedding night, and kept it in ſpite of the delights of matrimony.

The whole of the education given to daughters, tends to inſpire them with a paſſion for love.

We train them up from their childhood to the negotiations of love. Their beauty, their dreſs, their knowledge, their ſpeech, and their whole inſtruction tend only to this point. Their governeſſes imprint nothing in them but the idea of love, if it were only by continually repreſenting it to them, to give them a diſguſt to it. My daughter, (the only child I have) is now of an age, wherein forward young women are permitted by the laws to marry. She is of a puny, tender, and delicate conſtitution, and has been alſo brought up by her mother in a private particular manner, ſo that ſhe is but now beginning to be weaned from her childiſh ſimplicity. She was one day in my preſence reading a French book, wherein the word Fouteau ‡ occured, which is the name of a tree well known, viz. the beech. The woman, to whoſe conduct ſhe is committed, ſtopped her ſhort a little roughly, and made her ſkip over

* Diog. Laert. in the Life of Polemon, lib. iii. ſect. 17. ‡ A word very ſimilar in the ſound to a term of letchery in the French language.

that

that dangerous term. I let her alone, rather than break into their rules, for I never concern myself in that sort of government. The polity of the females has a mysterious train which we must leave to them. But if I am not mistaken, a conversation with twenty lacqueys for six months, would not so deeply have imprinted in her fancy the meaning, application, and all the consequences of the sound of those two wicked syllables, as this good old woman did by her reprimand and prohibition.

Motus doceri gaudet Ionicos
Matura virgo, et fingitur artubus
Jam nunc, et incestos amores
De tenero meditatur ungui *.

With pliant limbs the ripen'd maid,
Now joys to learn the wanton tread
Of dance Ionic, and to prove
The pleasures of forbidden love.

Moreover this passion is natural to them.

Let them but dispense a little with ceremony; let them but enter into the freedom of conversation; we are but children in this science compared to them. Were you to hear them set forth our courtship and compliments, they give you plainly to understand, that we bring them nothing which they did not know before, and had digested without our assistance. Would you think with Plato, that they were heretofore debauched when very young? I happened one day to be at a place, where I could, without being at all suspected, over-hear some of the discourse that passed betwixt them. What can I say of it? By our lady, (said I) it is high time for us to go and study the phrases of Amadis, and the registers of Boccace and Aretine, to be able to cope with them. We employ our time to good purpose indeed. There is not an expression, an example, or a proceeding, which they do not know better than our books. It is a discipline that has its source in their veins,

Et mentem Venus ipsa dedit †.

Venus herself did them inspire.

* Horace, lib. iii. ode 6, ver. 21, &c. † Virg. Geo. lib. iii. ver. 267.

and

and which thoſe good inſtructors, nature, youth, and health, are continually ſuggeſting to their fancy. They need not be at the pains to learn, they naturally breed it.

Nec tantum niveo gaviſa eſt ulla columbo,
Compar, vel ſi quid dicitur improbius,
Oſcula mordenti ſemper decerpere roſtro,
Quantum præcipue multicola eſt mulier *.

Not more delighted is the milk-white dove,
(Or any creature that's more prone to love)
Still to be billing with her mate, than is
Th' inconſtant woman ev'ry man to kiſs.

Inſomuch that did not fear and honour, of which they have their ſhare, give a little check to this natural violence of their deſire, we would become ſcandalous. All the motion in the world is bent and tends to this copulation; it is a matter infuſed throughout the whole; it is a centre to which all things point. We even find edicts of old and wiſe Rome made for the ſervice of of love, and precepts of Socrates for the inſtructions of courtezans.

Nec non libelli Stoici inter ſericos
Jacere pulvillos amant §.

The Stoics with all their gravity
Delighted to write on ſubjects of gallantry.

Zeno, amongſt other laws, regulated the divarications and motions in getting a maiden-head. What was the ſignification of the philoſopher Strato's book of carnal copulation? And of what did Theophraſtus treat in thoſe books which he intitled, one the Lover, the other Love? And what did Ariſtippus write of in his book of ancient delights? What is the purport of thoſe copious and lively deſcriptions in Plato, of the amours of his time? and of Demetrius Phalareus's book called the Lover? And Clinias, or the raviſhed Lover, by Heraclides Ponticus? And that of getting Children, or of Weddings, by Antiſthenes, and the other of the maſter, or the lover? And that of amorous exerciſes, by Ariſto?

* Catullus. Carm. lxvi. ver. 125, &c.
§ Hor. Epod. lib. ode viii, ver. 15, 16.

The

The two books, one of Love, the other the Art of Love, by Cleanthes? The amorous dialogues of Spherus? And the fable of Jupiter and Juno, by Chrysippus, impudent beyond all toleration? And his fifty lascivious epistles? I chuse to set aside the writings of the philosophers of the Epicurean sect, the protectors of sensual pleasures. There were fifty deities in time past assigned to this office. There is a nation where to assuage the concupiscence of those who went to their devotion, they kept strumpets in the temples for their enjoyment, and it was an act of ceremony to lie with them before the service. *Nimirum propter continentiam, incontinentia necessaria est, incendium ignibus extinguitur*; "incontinence "is necessary for the sake of continency, as a blast is to "extinguish a fire."

In the greatest part of the world this member of our body has been deified. In one, and the same province, some flayed themselves for the sake of offering and consecrating a piece of their skin; others offered and consecrated their seed. In another province, the young men made public incisions betwixt the skin and the flesh of that part, and made several overtures in it, through which they thrust splinters, the longest and biggest that they could endure; of which splinters they afterwards made a fire for a burnt offering to their gods, being not reckoned either over-vigorous or chaste if they did but shrink under that cruel torture. Elsewhere, the most sacred magistrate was revered and recognized by those parts; and in several ceremonies the image of them was pompously carried in public procession to the honour of several divinities. The Egyptian ladies at the Bacchanalian feasts, wore one about their necks carved in wood, exquisitely formed, as large and heavy as each was able to bear; besides that in the statue of their god, there was a representation of one which measured more* than the rest of the body. The married women in my neighbourhood represent the shape of it in the kerchiefs upon their fore-top, by way of ostentation, for the enjoyment

* Herodot. lib. ii. p. 122. Αἰδοῖον δὲ πολλῷ τέω ἔλασσον ἐὸν τοῦ ἄλλου σώματος, "a member which is not much less than the rest of the body." I cannot imagine why Montaigne took it into his head here to improve upon the extravagant exaggeration of the Egyptians.

they

they have had of it, and when they come to be widows they turn it behind, and hide it under their coifs. The moſt ſage matrons at Rome were proud of offering flowers and garlands to the god Priapus, and the virgins at the time of their wedding were ſeated upon his moſt criminal parts. Nay, I know not whether I have not in my time ſeen ſome ſuch air of devotion. What was the meaning of that ridiculous cod-piece worn by our fore-fathers, and by the Swiſs even to this day? To what purpoſe is the diſplay we make at this time of the form of our implements under our gaſkins; and often, which is worſe, by a falſe and impoſing repreſentation beyond their natural ſize? I can ſcarce help thinking, that this ſort of garb was invented in the better and more conſcientious ages, that mankind might not be deceived, by every one's giving an account of his talent in public. The moſt ſimple nations wear them ſtill with ſome reſemblance to the truth. In thoſe days the workman was informed, as he is now, of the meaſure of the arm or foot. That honeſt man, who, when I was but a youngſter, caſtrated ſo many fine antique ſtatues in his great city, for fear of corrupting the ſight, according to the opinion of that other honeſt old gentleman,

* *Flagitii principium eſt udare inter cives corpora*; "the cuſtom of appearing naked in public," has introduced a deprivity of manners amongſt us, ought to have conſidered that, as in the myſteries of the Bona Dea, every maſculine appearance was excluded; ſo it was doing nothing if he did not alſo cauſe horſes, aſſes, and in ſhort, all nature to be caſtrated.

Omne adeo genus in terris hominumque, ferarumque
Et genus æquoreum, pecudes, pictæque volucres,
In furias ignemque ruunt †.

All creatures thus the raging paſſion find;
For whether they be thoſe of human kind,
Beaſts, wild or tame, fiſh, or the feather'd choir,
They're each inflam'd with wanton love's deſire.

* It was a ſaying of Ennius, quoted by Cicero, with this mark of approbation, "Bene ergo Ennius Flagitii," &c. Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. iv. cap. 33.
† Virg. Geo. lib. iii. ver. 144, &c.

The gods, says Plato, have furnished us men with an unruly tyrannical member, which like a furious animal, attempts to make all things subject to its violent appetite: and they have also given the women one like a voracious and craving animal; which, if nourishment be refused in its season, rages, impatient of delay; and its fury working in their bodies, stops the passages, hinders respiration, and causes a thousand disorders, till by having sucked in the fruit of the common thirst, the bottom of their matrix is plentifully sprinkled, and furnished with seed.

Now my legislator should also have considered, that perhaps, it were a more chaste and beneficial practice, to let them know it betimes to the life, than to permit them to guess what it is, according to the freedom and warmth of their imagination. Instead of the real parts, they therein substitute others, that are three times more extravagant, through their desires and hopes. And a certain friend of mine was ruined by having exposed his, when it was not yet proper to apply them to their more serious use. Who knows what mischief is done by those enormous pictures which the boys draw upon the passages and stair-cases of the royal palaces? From hence proceeds a cruel contempt of our natural furniture. And how do we know but that Plato, by ordering, after the example of other well instituted republics, that both the men and the women, old and young, should expose themselves naked to one another in his gymnastics, had a view to this? The Indian women, who see the men stark naked, have at least palled their sense of seeing. And though it is said by the women of the great kingdom of Pegu, (who have nothing to cover them below the waist, but a cloth slit before, which is so scanty, that with all the ceremonious decency they pretend to, all they have is to be seen at every step) that this was an invention purely to allure the men to them, and to draw off their affection from those of their own sex, to which that nation is entirely addicted; it may be said, that they lose more than they get by it, and that an appetite is not so sharp to an object after it has been once glutted by the sight of it. Also Livia said, that to a virtuous

tuous woman, the ſight of a naked man is no more than that of an image*. The Lacedæmonian women, more virgins when wives, than our daughters are, daily ſaw the young men of their city ſtripped naked at their exerciſes, while they themſelves were not over careful to hide their thighs as they walked, thinking themſelves ſufficiently covered by their virtue without any farding-gale. But they of whom St. Auſtin ſpeaks, have aſcribed to nakedneſs a wonderful power of temptation, by making it a doubt, whether women at the day of judgment ſhall ariſe again in their own ſex, and not rather in ours, that we may not be again tempted in that ſtate of holineſs. In ſhort, we allure and provoke them by all manner of means: we are inceſſantly heating and ſtirring up their imagination, and yet we find fault. Let us confeſs the truth; there is ſcarce a man of us who is not more afraid of the ſhame accruing to him from the vices of his wife, than from his own; and who is not more ſolicitous for the conſcience of his good wife (marvellous charity!) than for his own; who had not rather be guilty of theft and ſacrilege, and that his wife ſhould be a murdereſs and a heretic, than that ſhe ſhould be as immodeſt as her huſband. An unjuſt eſtimate of vices this! Both we and they are liable to a thouſand corruptions, more miſchievous and unnatural than laſciviouſneſs. But we form and poiſe vices, not according to nature, but according to our intereſt; by which means they aſſume ſo many various forms.

The ſeverity of our decrees renders the application of the women to this vice more violent and vicious than is conſiſtent with the nature of it, and involves it in conſequences worſe than their cauſe. They would be glad to go to the courts of law for gain, and to the field of battle for honour, rather than, in the midſt of eaſe and pleaſure, to have to do with what is ſo difficult to preſerve. Do not they ſee that there is neither merchant, nor lawyer, nor ſoldier, who does not quit his buſineſs for the purſuit of this; and the very porter and cobler too, jaded and oppreſſed as they are with labour and hunger?

* Δίωνος Τιζείου, pag. 112. printed at Paris by Robert Stevens.

Nunc

Nunc tu quæ tenuit dives Achæmenes,
Aut pinguis Phrygiæ Mygdonias opes,
Permutare velis crine Licinniæ,
Plenas aut Arabum domos?
Dum flagrantia detorquet ad oscula
Cervicem, aut facili sævitiâ negat,
Quæ poscente magis gaudeat eripi,
Interdum rapere occupet *.

Wouldst thou, for all that Achæmenes had,
Or all the Phrygian wealth before thee laid,
Or riches that in Arab's houses are,
Exchange one lock of dear Licinia's hair?
While to the fervent kiss her neck she plies,
Or with a pretty anger then denies
What she had rather you would snatch by far,
Than that you should desist our of despair.

Chastity in a woman hard to be kept.

I question whether the exploits of Cæsar and Alexander were performed with a resolution more inflexible than that of a beautiful young woman, bred up in high life, surrounded by so many vicious examples, and yet preserving herself inviolate in the midst of a thousand continual and powerful solicitations. There is no action more difficult, and yet more vigorous than this not-doing. I take it that it is more easy for a person to wear a suit of armour all the days of one's life than a maidenhead: and the vow of virginity is of all others the most noble, as being the most burdensome. St. Jerom says, *Diaboli virtus in lumbis est.*

What ought to be an encouragement to the women to take great care of it.

We have certainly resigned the most arduous, and the most vigorous of human endeavours to the ladies; and let them by all means have the honour of it. This ought to be a singular spur to excite them to hold it out obstinately. It is a fine subject for them to brave us, and to trample under foot that vain preeminence in valour and virtue, which we pretend to over them. They will find that, if they do but keep

* Horace, lib. ii. ode 12: ver. 21, &c.

a guard

a guard upon themſelves, they will not only be the more eſteemed, but the better beloved for it. A gallant gentleman does not abandon his purſuit becauſe he has met with a denial, provided it be a denial from chaſtity, and not from averſion. We may ſwear, threaten, and complain, as much as we will; we lye all the while; for we love them the better for it. There is no allurement like modeſty, if it be not with harſh treatment and ſour looks. It is ſtupidity and meanneſs to be obſtinate againſt hatred and contempt; but againſt a virtuous and ſteddy reſolution, accompanied with a grateful principle, it is the exerciſe of a noble and generous ſoul. The ladies may acknowledge our ſervices to a certain degree, and give us civilly to underſtand that they do not diſdain us; for the law which enjoins them to abhor us, becauſe we adore them, and hate us becauſe we love them, is certainly a cruel one, were it only for the difficulty of complying with it. Why will they not hear our offers and demands as long as they are circumſcribed within the bounds of modeſty? Wherefore ſhould we gueſs that they have a freer meaning to themſelves? A certain queen of our time ſaid ingenuouſly, that to refuſe theſe advantages is a teſtimony of weakneſs in a woman, and an impeachment of her own readineſs; and that no lady could boaſt of her chaſtity who had not been tempted. The limits of honour are not ſo ſtraitened but it may relax itſelf a little, and may be diſpenſed with in ſome meaſure without a forfeiture. There lies before its frontier ſome ſpace free, indifferent, and neuter. He that has drove it by force into its own nook and fort, is a ſimpleton if he be not ſatisfied with his fortune. The value of the conqueſt is conſidered by the difficulty of it. Would you know what impreſſion your ſervice, and your merit, have made upon her heart, meaſure it by her behaviour. There are ſome women perhaps who may grant more that do not grant ſo much. The obligation of a benefit is altogether connected with the will of the perſon that grants it, the other circumſtances co-incident with the favour, being dumb, dead, and caſual. It coſts her dearer to grant you that little, than it would her companion to grant her all.

If

If in any thing rarity inhances the value, it ought in this. Do not consider how little it is that is given, but howfew have it to give. The value of money varies according to the coin, and stamp of the place. Whatever the spite and indiscretion of some persons may make them say as to the excess of their discontent, virtue and truth will always regain their advantage. I have known some who, after their reputation had for a long time been blasted, have regained the universal approbation of mankind merely by their constancy, without any care or art; after which every one repented, and recanted what he had believed; and from maids that were a little suspected, they have afterwards held the first rank among the ladies of honour. Somebody said to Plato that all the world spoke ill of him, "Let them say what they will," said he, "I will live so as to make them change their note." Besides the fear of God, and the value of a renown so uncommon, which ought to incite them to take care of themselves, the corruption of this age compels them to it: and if I was in their place, there is nothing that I would not do rather than trust my reputation in such dangerous hands. I remember formerly that the pleasure of telling (a pleasure little inferiour to that of doing) was only indulged to be communicated to one entire faithful friend; whereas now, boasting of favours received, and of the secret liberality of the ladies, has a great share in the common table-talk, and conversation at assemblies. In truth it is an argument of too abject, and too mean a spirit, to suffer those tender and obliging favours to be so insolently persecuted, rummaged, and ransacked by persons so ungrateful, indiscreet, and inconstant.

The unreasonableness of jealousy.

This our immoderate and unwarrantable exasperation against this vice of incontinence, arises from the most trifling and tempestuous disease that afflicts the human mind, which is jealousy.

* *Quis vetat appoſito lumen de lumine ſumi?*
Dent licet aſſiduè, nil tamen inde perit.

Although a torch ſhould lend its flame
To give another light,
Its luſtre ſtill remains the ſame,
And ſhews as fair and bright.

That paſſion, and its ſiſter envy, ſeem to be the moſt ſilly of all the tribe. As to the latter, I can ſay but little of it. It is a paſſion, though it is repreſented ſo ſtrong and powerful, which, thanks to it, has no room in my breaſt. As to the former, I have ſome knowledge of it at leaſt by ſight. The very beaſts feel it. Chratis, the ſhepherd, having fallen in love with a ſhe-goat, the male, while the ſhepherd was aſleep, went, in a fit of jealouſy, and butted him with its head till it beat our his brains †.

The wiſeſt of men and nations have been the leaſt touched with this paſſion.

We have carried this paſſion to as great an exceſs as ſome of the barbarous nations. The beſt diſciplined of them have been tainted with it, and with reaſon, but not tranſported to fury by it.

Enſe maritali nemo confoſſus adulter
Purpureo Stygias ſanguine tinxit aquas ‖.

Ne'er did adulterer, by the huſband ſlain,
With purple blood the Stygian waters ſtain.

Lucullus, Cæſar, Pompey, Anthony, Cato, and other brave men, were cuckolds, and knew it without making any diſturbance about it; and in thoſe times there was but one fool, Lepidus, who broke his heart upon it §.

* The ſenſe of the laſt verſe is in Ovid's Arte Amandi, lib. iii. ver. 93, but Montaigne has taken the words from an epigram, intitled, Priapus in Veterum Poetarum Catalectis, which begins thus,

" Obſcure poteram tibi dicere, da mihi quod tu
" Des licet aſſidue, nil tamen inde perit.

† Ælian. lib. xii. cap. 42. of his treatiſe of animals. ‖ Ovid. § The father of one of the triumvirate, who died, ſays Plutarch, having broke his heart, not ſo much by the diſtreſs of his affairs, as by a diſcovery he made from a letter which fell into his hands that his wife had forfeited her honour. The Life of Pompey, ch. 5. of Amyot's tranſlation.

Ab

Ah tum te miserum malique fati,
Quem attractis pedibus patente portâ,
Percurrent mugilesque raphanique *.

Wretched will then be thy malignant fate,
When by the heels they drag thee from the gate,
Thro' show'rs of rotten roots and stinking scate.

Vulcan not very jealous of his wife Venus.

And the God of our poet, when he surprized one of her gallants with his wife, satisfied himself with only putting them to shame.

——————atque alignis de diis non tristibus optat
Sic fieri turpes †.

One of the Gods, to merriment dispos'd,
Seeing the lovers in the net inclos'd,
Wished that he had to shame been so expos'd.

Yet he takes fire at the soft caresses with which she accosts him, complaining that she thereby shewed a jealousy of his affection.

Quid causas petis ex alto? fiducia cessit
Quò tibi, diva, mei ‖ *?*

Why are, my Goddess, all these reasons tried?
Say why in me no longer you confide?

Nay, she desires armour of him for her bastard.

Arma rogo, genitrix nato §.

The mother for her son does armour crave.

Which is freely granted: and Vulcan speaks honourably of Æneas.

* This was a punishment, more infamous than fatal, inflicted on adulterers when they were taken in the fact, Catull. to Aurelius, carm. 16. ver. 17, &c. † Ovid's Met. lib. iv. fab. 5. ver. 21, 22. ‖ Virg. Æneid, lib. viii. ver. 395. § Ibid. ver. 383.

Arma acri facienda viro *.

Armour must for a valiant man be made.

I consent to leave this excess of goodness to the Gods.

Nec Divis homines componere æquum est †.

Nor is it fit to equal men with Gods.

As to the confounding of children, besides that the gravest legislators ordain and affect it in their republics, it does not concern the women, in whom this passion of jealousy is, I know not how, still more firmly established.

——*Sæpe etiam Juno maxima cæluolum*
Conjugis in culpa flagravit quotidianâ ‖.

And Juno, with fierce jealousy inflam'd,
Her husband's daily slips has often blam'd.

How the women are tortured by jealousy, and how odious they become when they abandon themselves to this passion.

When jealousy seizes these poor weak souls, incapable of making resistance, it is pity to see how cruelly it drags them on, and tyrannizes over them. It insinuates itself into them under the colour of friendship, but after it has once possessed them, the same causes which served for a foundation of good will, serve as a foundation of mortal hatred. Of all the distempers of the mind it is that which most things contribute to nourish, and fewest to remedy. The virtue, health, merit, the reputation of the husband, stimulate their spite and rage.

Nullæ sunt inimicitiæ nisi amoris acerbæ ‡.

No enmities so keen as those of love.

This fever defaces and corrupts all that they have of the beautiful and good in other respects; and there's no ac-

* Virg. Æneid. lib. viii. ver. 441. † Catullus ad Mantium, carm. 66. ver. 141. ‖ Id. ibid. ver. 138, 139. ‡ Propertius, lib. ii. eleg. 8. ver. iii.

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tion of ajealous women, be she ever so chaste, and ever so good a housewife, that does not savour of fourness and impertinence. It is a furious agitation that throws them back to an extremity quite contrary to its cause. This was but too plainly verified by one * Octavius at Rome, who, having lain with Pontia Posthumia, found his love so much increased by fruition that he solicited her with all importunity to marry him, which, finding he could not persuade her to †, his extreme love for her hurried him to actions of the most cruel and mortal hatred, so that in fact he killed her. In like manner the ordinary symtoms of this other distemper of love are in intestine hatreds, private conspiracies, and combinations.

——*notumque, furens quid fœmina possit* ‡.

What a woman is capable of doing in her fury is not unknown.

And a rage the more violent, because it is forced to smother itself under the pretence of good will.

The obligation to chastity hard to observe.

Now the obligation of chastity is very extensive. Is it their will which we would have them curb? This is a very pliant and active faculty, and is very prompt to be stopped. How if dreams sometimes engage the women so far that they cannot deny them? It is not in the power of them, nor perhapes of chastity itself, because it is a female, to defend themselves from concupiscence and desire. If we are only interested in their will, what a case are we in then? Do but imagine what a great throng there would be of men to obtain the privilege of flying, like a feathered arrow, without eyes and tongue, to the arms of every woman that would accept them. The Scythian women caused the eyes of § all their slaves and prisoners of war to be plucked out,

* Tacitus Annals, lib. xiii. cap. 44. calls him Octavius Sagitta. † Id. ibid. ‡ Virg. Æneid. lib. v. ver. 6. § Herodotus lib. 4. p. 255. does not say that the Scythian women had the eyes of their slaves plucked out for the purpose assigned by Montaigne, but that the Scythians themselves deprived all their slaves of sight for the purpose of drawing milk from their

out, that they might make use of them with the more freedom and secrecy. Oh! the furious advantage of opportunity! Should any one ask me what was the first thing to be done in love, I would answer, that it was to know how to nick the happy moment; and the same as to the second, and the third things. It is the critical point that does every thing. Opportunity has often failed me, and sometimes I have miscarried in the attempt. May I never again have the mortifying circumstance to be laughed at. There is in this age more necessity for temerity, for which our youth plead their heat of blood as an excuse. But, were the women to examine the matter more strictly, they would find that it rather proceeded from contempt. I had a superstitious fear of giving offence, and have a hearty respect where I love. Besides, he who in this traffic takes away the reverence of it, defaces its lustre. I would in this affair have a man be a little childish, timorous, and servile. If not altogether in this, I have in other things some airs of that foolish bashfulness which Plutarch speaks of, and the course of my life has been divers ways hurt and blemished by it; a quality very ill suiting my universal form. What is there also amongst us but sedition and discord? I can as ill brook to take a refusal as I can to give one: and it so much troubles me to be troublesome to another person, that in cases where I am forced to try the good will of any one in a matter that is doubtful, and will be chargeable to him, I do it faintly, and against the grain. But if it be to serve myself (though Homer, Odyssey, lib. xvii. ver. 347. says very true, that "Modesty is a foolish virtue in an indigent person," I commonly substitute a third person to blush in my stead, and have the like difficulty to deny those who employ me; so that it has sometimes befallen me to have had a mind to deny when the thing was not in my power. It is a folly therefore to attempt to curb in women a desire that is so vehement in them, and so natural: and, when I hear

mares, which was their food. But it does not appear very plain that there was a necessity of blinding those poor slaves for this work; and therefore the reason which Montaigne assigns for it is much more easy to comprehend.

some

some of them boast of having a will so innocent and cool, I laugh at them. They retire too far back. If she be an old toothless decrepid trot, or a young dry scrag, though they are not altogether to be believed, they may say it at least with more probability. But they, who are yet capable of love, and still pant with desire, spoil their own market; forasmuch as indiscreet excuses tend to accuse them; like a gentleman in my neighbourhood, suspected of impotency,

Languidior tenerâ cui pendens sicula betâ
Nunquam se mediam sustulit ad tunicam ‡.

who, three or four days after he was married, in order to justify himself, swore point-blank that he had rode twenty stages the night before; which oath was afterwards made use of to dissolve the marriage. Besides, it is saying nothing to the purpose; for there is no continency nor virtue where there is no contrary effort. It is true, it must be said, but I am not ready to comply. The saints themselves talk in this manner; I mean those who boast in good earnest of their coldness and insensibility, and who put on a serious countenance in order to be believed; for when it is spoken with an affected look, where the eyes give the lie to the tongue, and when they use the cant of their profession, which always goes against the hair, I like it well. I adore freedom and simplicity, but there is no remedy; if it be not altogether simple and childish, it is silly and unbecoming the ladies in this commerce, and immediately verges to impudence. Their disguises and their figures only serve to cozen fools. Lying is there in its seat of honour. It is a bye-way that leads us to the truth by a back-door. If we cannot curb their imaginations, what is it we would have them to do? Do, indeed? there are ways enough by which chastity may be violated without any foreign communication,

‡ Catull. carm. 65. ver. 21, 22, of Mattaire's edition.

Illud ſæpe facit quod ſine teſte fecit *.

He often does himſelf apply
To that he does when none is by.

And they whom we leaſt ſuſpect are perhaps the moſt to be feared. Their crimes that make the leaſt noiſe are the worſt, or as we ſay, the ſtill ſow eats the moſt malt.

Offendor mæchâ ſimplicione minùs †.

A profeſs'd ſtrumpet gives me leſs offence.

There are means capable of violating their chaſtity without immodeſty, and, which is more without their knowledge §. *Obſtetrix virginis cujuſdam integritatem manu velut explorans, ſive malevolentiâ, ſive inſcitiâ, ſive caſu, dum inſpicit, perdidit.* Some have loſt their maidenhead by a too curious ſearch for it, and others by dallying with it have deſtroyed it. We cannot exactly circumſcribe the actions which we forbid them. There is a neceſſity for couching our law under general and uncertain terms. The very idea which we form for their chaſtity is ridiculous; for among the extraordinary examples of it, which I have met with, are Fatua the wife of Faunus, who after her marriage, never ſuffered herſelf to be ſeen by any man whatſoever; and the wife of Hiero, who never knew that her huſband had a ſtinking breath, becauſe ſhe imagined that it was a quality common to all men ‖. They muſt be inſenſible and inviſible, or we cannot be eaſy.

Chaſtity depends on the innocence of the will.

But we confeſs that the beſt way to form a judgment of this duty, is by an inſpection into the will. There have been huſbands who have ſuffered this accident, not only without reproaching, or taking offence at their wives, but with ſpecial obligation to them, and a recommendation of their virtue. There was a woman that prized

* Martial, lib. vii. ep. 61. ver 6. † Id. lib. vi. ep. 7. § Theſe words are a confirmation of what Montaigne has been ſaying, and though they are to be met with in St. Auſtin's treatiſe, de Civitate Dei, lib. 1. cap. 18 they are too groſs to be put into plain Engliſh. ‖ Plutarch, in his remarkable Paſſages of ancient Kings.

her

her honour above her life, who prostituted it to the furious lust of a mortal enemy, to save her husband's life; and thereby did that for him, which she would by no means have done for herself. This is not a place to produce such instances; they are too sublime and too rich to be set to view by any light that I can throw upon them. Let us reserve them for a nobler place. But as to instances of a more common lustre, are there not women every day amongst us, who let themselves out to hire only for the benefit of their husbands, and by their express order and brokerage? Thus heretofore Phaulius of Argos, to gratify his ambition, offered his wife to king Philip, just as Galba did out of civility; who having invited Mecænas to supper, and finding that his wife and he made love-signs by their mutual ogling, fell back on his couch, like a man greatly oppressed with sleepiness, to give opportunity to their amours *: and this he owned too with a very good grace; for at the same time, a servant presuming to meddle with the plates, &c. that were upon the table, he said to him very frankly; "How now, you rascal? "do not you perceive that I only sleep to oblige Me- "cænas?" There are some licentious men, whose wills may be more reformed than those of others that behave to outward appearance with more regularity. As we see some who complain of having made a vow of chastity before they came to years of discretion; I have also known others complain truly of having as early devoted themselves to debauchery. The vice of parents, or the force of necessity, which is a rude counsellor, may be the cause of it. In the East Indies, though chastity be of singular recommendation, yet custom permitted a married woman to prostitute herself to any one that would present her with an elephant; and proud she was that she had such a value set on her. Phœdon the philosopher, after the conquest of Elis, his native country, made it his trade to prostitute the beauty of his youth, as long as it lasted, for money to support him. And Solon, they say, was the first man in Greece, who by

Women prostituted by their husbands for lucre.

* Plutarch, in his Treatise of Love, p. 16.

his

his laws gave liberty to the women, at the expence of their modesty, to provide for the necessaries of life; a custom, which Herodotus says, was received in many governments before his time. Besides, what is any one the better for such a painful solicitude? For be the passion of jealousy ever so just, we ought to consider whether it will turn out to our advantage. Does any man think, that with all his industry, he can put an effectual bar upon the women?

Pone seram, cohibe; sed quis custodiet ipsos
Custodes? Cauta est, et ab illis incipit uxor *.

Lock up your wife, or else, as some advise,
Set a strict watch; but who shall watch the spies?
Them first she bribes, and all your art defies.

What conveniency can they be at a loss for in so knowing an age as the present?

Curiosity in the article of women's chastity pernicious.

Curiosity is vicious every where, but here it is also pernicious; it is a folly to be inquisitive into a disease for which there is no medicine that does not inflame and make it worse; a disease which is made more shameful and more public by the means of jealousy; and the revenge of which wounds our issue more than it heals us. You wither and die in the search of so obscure a proof. How miserable have some of my time been made by having attained to the knowledge of it! If the informer does not apply a remedy and relief at the same time with the discovery, it is an injurious information, and he is more deserving of a stab than a downright liar. We laugh as much at him who takes pains to prevent his being a cuckold, as at him who is really such, and knows it not. The stamp of cuckoldom is so indelible, that he who once has it, always carries it to his grave. The punishment is more expressive of it than the crime. It is to a very fine purpose, to open the curtain and to lift up the quilt to discover our private misfortunes, and to

* Juv. sat. vi. ver 346.

trumpet

trumpet them on tragic scaffolds, and such misfortunes too, as only sting us by being reported: for a wife is thought to be good, or a marriage happy, not as they are really so, but because the world is silent about them. A man must be discreet to avoid this tormenting and unprofitable knowledge: and the Romans † when they returned from any journey, used to send notice beforehand of their coming, that their wives might not be surprised. To this purpose it is, that a certain nation introduced a custom, that the priest should on the day of any marriage, unlock the bride's cabinet, to free the husband from the doubt and curiosity of examining, by his first trial, whether she comes a virgin to his bed, or has been violated before.

A gentleman is not the less esteemed for being dishonoured by his wife.

But the world will be talking. I know a hundred honest gentlemen that are not very much disgraced by being cuckolds. A gallant man is pitied for it, but not despised. Order the matter so, that your virtue may smother your misfortune, that good men may curse the occasion of it, and that he who wrongs you may tremble but to think of it. But who escapes being talked of at the same rate, from the least even to the greatest?

‡ —— *Tot qui legionibus imperitavit,*
Et melior quam tu multis fuit, improbè, rebus §.

To whose command whole legions once did bow,
And who (poor wretch) was better far than thou.

You see how many honest men are reproached with this in your presence, and you may be sure that you are not spared behind your back. Nay, the very ladies will be laughing too, and what are they more apt to banter in this virtuous age, than a peaceable and most happy

† Plutarch, in his Treatise of Questions about the Roman Affairs, chap. ix.

‡ The 1041st verse, of which Montaigne quotes the sense rather than the words, is here inserted before the ver. 1039.

§ Lucret. lib. iii. ver. 1039, 1041.

married

Cuckoldom an evil, which one is obliged to keep secret.

married couple? There is not a man among you, who has not made somebody a cuckold; for nature deals altogether in retaliation and variety. The frequency of this accident must have lessened the bitterness of it long ago, and it is now past into custom.

Miserable suffering this! which is also aggravated, because improper to be made known.

Fors etiam nostris invidet quæstibus aures *.

And fortune spitefully denies
To lend an ear unto our cries.

For to what friend dare you trust your complaints? Who, if he does not laugh at them, will not make use of the occasion as an introduction and instruction to come in for a share of the quarry. Wise folks keep the bitters as well as the sweets of matrimony secret: and among the other teazing articles that are to be met with in this state, to a talkative man as I am, this is the chief, that custom renders it indecent and injurious to communicate to another all that one knows and feels of it.

The jealousy of a wife is very fatal to her husband.

To give the women themselves any advice to disgust them against jealousy would be time lost; their very being is such a compound of suspicion, vanity, and curiosity, that there is no hopes of curing them by lawful means. They often recover themselves out of this infirmity by a form of health, much more to be dreaded than the malady itself. For as there are enchantments which cannot remove the evil but by throwing it upon another, they are glad to transfer this fever to their husbands, when they are rid of it themselves. Nevertheless, to say the truth, I do not know whether a man can suffer a worse thing from them than jealousy; it is the most dangerous of their qualities, as the head is of all the parts of their bodies. Pittacus said †, that "every one "had his vexation; that his was the bad head of his

* Catullus de Nuptiis Pelei, carm. 62. ver. 170.
† Plutarch of the Peace of Mind, chap. xi.

wife;

"wife; but for which he should think himself perfectly "happy." This, sure, was a very sad inconvenience, with which a person so wise, just, and valiant, found the whole course of his life poisoned! What then must we little men do? The senate of Marseilles might well grant the request of him who desired leave to kill himself, in order to be delivered from the clamour of his wife. For this is a mischief never removed but by carrying away the piece, and which there is no compounding for but by flight or patience; both of which are hard terms. In my opinion, he was not a novice, who said, that happy was the marriage where the wife was blind, and the husband deaf.

The dangerous consequences of too great a restraint laid on the wife by the husband.

Let us also consider, whether the great and violent severity of the obligation we lay upon them, does not produce two effects contrary to our end, viz. Whether it does not render the gallants more eager to attack, and the women more forward to surrender. For as to the first, by raising the value of the place, we raise the value and desire of the conquest. Who would not think that Venus herself cunningly enhanced the price of her merchandize, by making the laws her bawds, knowing how insipid that pleasure would be which was not heightened by fancy and its dearness? In short, it is all swine's flesh, only varied, as the host of Flaminius said, by different sauce. Cupid is a sly deity, who makes it his sport to contend with devotion and justice. It is his pride that his power gives a shock to every other power, and that all other rules yield to his.

Materiam culpæ prosequiturque suæ ‡.

And seeks fresh fewel for his fire.

As to the second point, should not we be less cuckolds if we less feared to be so, considering the temper of women whose desires are prompted and excited by prohibition?

‡ Ovid Trist. lib. iv. eleg. 1. ver. 34.

Ubi velis nolunt, ubi nolis volunt ultro *,
Conceſſa pudet ire via †.

In ev'ry varied choice, repugnant ſtill,
They wou'd, you won't, and when you won't, they will.

What better conſtruction can we put on the behaviour of Meſſalina? She at firſt cuckolded her huſband in private, as is the common practice: but managing her affairs with too much eaſe, by reaſon of her huſband's ſtupidity, ſhe on a ſudden ſcorned privacy, ſcrupled not to carry on her amours in public, owned her humble ſervants, and entertained and favoured them in the ſight of all the world. She aimed to make her huſband ſenſible of it. But nothing of all this being able to rouſe the animal, and rendering her pleaſures languid and flat, by that ſtupid facility with which ſhe ſeemed to authoriſe and make them lawful, what does ſhe, but, being the wife of a healthy emperor ‡, living at Rome, the theatre of the world, in the face of the ſun, and with public feaſting and ceremony ſhe one day, as her huſband was out of town, married Silius, whom ſhe had enjoyed long before? Does it not ſeem as if ſhe was going to become chaſte through her huſband's indifferency for her? Or that ſhe deſired another huſband, who might ſharpen her appetite by his jealouſy, and by oppoſing it ſtir it up? But the firſt difficulty ſhe met with was alſo the laſt. This beaſt rouſed on a ſudden. Theſe ſleepy, ſluggiſh mortals are often the moſt dangerous. I have known, by experience, that this extreme patience, when it comes to be worn out, produces the moſt ſevere revenge; for, by taking fire all on a ſudden, anger and fury combined in one, exert all their efforts at the firſt diſcharge;

—— *irarumque omnis effundit habenas* ‖.

he put her to death, and with her a great number of her correſpondents; even one § whom ſhe had forced to her bed with ſcourges.

* Ter. Eunuch, act 4. ſect. 7. ver. 43. † Lucan. lib. ii. ver. 446. ‡ Tacit. Annal. lib. xi. cap. 26, 27, &c. ‖ Virg. Æneid. lib. xii. ver. 499. § Mneſter, the comedian, and Traulus Montanus, Tacit. Annal lib. xi. cap. 36.

What

What Virgil said of Venus and Vulcan was more suitably expressed by Lucretius, of a stolen enjoyment betwixt her and Mars.

——*belli fera munera Mavors,*
Armipotens regit, in gremium qui sæpe tuum se
Rejicit, æterno devinctus volnere amoris:
Atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice reposta
Pascit amore avidos inhians in te, dea, visus
Eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore:
Hunc tu, diva, tuo recubantem corpore sancto
Circumfusa super, suaveis ex ore loquelæ
Funde *.

—— for furious Mars,
The only governor and god of wars,
With thee enamoured doth oft resort
To taste the pleasures of the Paphian court;
Where, on thy bosom, he supinely lies,
Panting, and drinking love, at both his eyes;
Sucking thy balmy breath with eager kiss,
And rushing to enjoy yet greater bliss;
Then, while thy tender limbs about him move,
Involv'd and fetter'd in the clasps of love,
Thy charms in that transporting moment try,
And softest language to his heart apply.

A lively description of the amours of Venus and Mars, more natural than that which represents the transports of Vulcan for Venus.

When I consider these words †, *Rejicit, pascit, inhians, pendet*, and that word *circumfusa*, from whence *infusus* is nobly derived, I have a contempt for those little witticisms and verbal allusions which have started up since.

What constitutes true eloquence.

Those good poets stood in need of no smart subtle turn of phrase. Their language is copious, and full of a natural and constant spirit. It is altogether epigrammatical; with a sting not only in the tail, but in the head, stomach,

* Lucret. lib. i. ver. 33, &c. † All these words so natural and expressive; some of them in the passage out of Virgil, mentioned in one of the preceding passages of this chapter, and the rest in the quotation here inserted.

and

and feet. There is nothing forced in it, nothing drawling, and it ever keeps the same pace, without variation *Contextus totus virilis est, non sunt circa flosculos occupati* *, "the whole texture of it is manly, without the ornament of flowers." It is not an eloquence merely delicate and inoffensive: it is nervous and solid; and not only pleases, but actually engrosses and captivates, and the finest understandings are the most charmed with it. When I see those sublime forms of expression so lively, so profound, I do not say it is well uttered, but well conceived. It is the sprightliness of the imagination that gives pomp and sublimity to the language. *Pectus est quod disertum facit* †, "eloquence is owning to the frame "of the mind." Our people call language judgment, and fine words, full conceptions. This painting is not so much owing to the dexterity of hand, as to the lively impression of the object on the mind. Gallus's language is simple, because his conception is simple. Horace is not content with a superficial expression; that would betray him; he sees into things farther and more clearly. His wit breaks into, and rummages the whole magazine of words and figures to represent his thoughts, and he must have terms to express himself, which are more than ordinary, because such is his conception. Plutarch says that he knew the Latin tongue by things ‖: So here, the sense illuminates and produces the words, which are no longer words of air, but of flesh and bone. They signify more than they express. The novices in a language have also some idea of this. For in Italy I said whatever I had a mind to in common discourse; but in serious subjects I did not dare to trust to an idiom, which I could not turn and wind out of its common path. I was for introducing something of my own.

* Seneca, epist. 33. † Quintilian, lib. x. ‖ In the Life of Demosthenes, chap. 1. I began to take Latin authors in hand, says he, very late, being far advanced in the decline of life, when an odd thing happened to me, which is nevertheless true, viz. That I did not so much learn to understand things by the words, as I came to understand the words, in some degree, by the use and knowledge I had of the things thereby signified.

The

Men of wit set off a language by their way of handling and managing it; not so much innovating it, as by putting it to more vigorous and various services, and straining and bending it to them. They do not introduce new terms into it, but they enrich those they have already, give them more weight, spirit, and energy; and add new turns, which are however authorised by the wise and ingenious application, which they are not at a loss to make of them. This is the end which all should have in view, who are ambitious of writing well; and as for those who have not genius to attain to it, they ought to think of something else. And indeed how few have a sufficiency of this talent, is evident from the many French scribblers of the age. They are too bold and haughty to follow the common road; but the want of invention and discretion ruins them. There is nothing to be seen in their writings, but a wretched affectation of a strange novelty of style, with cold and absurd disguises, which, instead of elevating the subject, depress it. Provided they can but trick up themselves with new-fangled terms, they care not what they avail; and, for the sake of bringing in a new word, though it be by head and shoulders, they leave out the common one, though often more nervous and significant.

Wits enrich language, and give it fresh vigour.

I find stuff enough in our language, but there is some fault in the modelling of it; for there is nothing that might not be made out of our terms of hunting and war, which is a fruitful soil to borrow from: and the forms of speech, like herbs, improve and grow stronger by being transplanted. I think the language copious enough, but not sufficiently pliable and vigorous. It commonly flags under a powerful conception. If you are upon the sublime, you often perceive it languishes and droops under you, and that then Latin steps in to its relief, as Greek does to other languages. We do not easily discern the energy of some of those words which I have selected, because the common use of them has, in some measure, impaired their beauty, and rendered it vulgar; as is the case in our common

Montaigne's opinion of the French language.

talk, wherein there are excellent phraſes and metaphors, the beauty of which is faded by their being antiquated, and their luſtre ſullied by too common handling. But this abates nothing of the reliſh to men of underſtanding, neither does it derogate from the glory of thoſe ancient authors who, it is likely, firſt brought thoſe words into that luſtre.

The ſciences are treated of with too much art.

The ſciences treat of things with too much refinement, and in an artificial manner, very different from that which is common and natural. My page makes love, and underſtands it; but read to him Leo, the Hebrew, and Ficinus, where they treat of the lover, his thoughts and his actions, and he knows nothing at all of the matter. I diſcover in Ariſtotle moſt of my common impulſes, which are there covered and cloathed in another robe for the uſe of the ſchools. Well may they ſpeed; but, were I of the profeſſion, I would naturalize art as much as artify nature. Let us leave Bembo and Equicola where we found them.

Why Montaigne choſe to have no books by him but Plutarch while he was writing.

When I write I care not for the company and the remembrance of books, leſt they ſhould break into my plan: and to ſay the truth, good authors too much debaſe and diſcourage me. I am very much of the mind of that painter who, having made a wretched figure of ſome cocks, charged his boys not to ſuffer any natural cock to come into his ſhop; and, in order to give myſelf a little luſtre, had need rather of the invention of the muſician Antimonydes, who, when he was to perform a piece of muſic, took care that the auditory ſhould either before, or after him be entertained with ſome other ſorry ſongſters. But I can hardly be without a Plutarch; he is ſo univerſal and copious, that upon all occaſions, and whatever extravagant ſubject you pitch upon, he is officious to ſupply your neceſſity, and ſtretches out a liberal hand to you with an inexhauſtible ſtore of riches and embelliſhments. It vexes me that he is ſo liable to be plundered by thoſe who are converſant with him. I can no ſooner make an acquaintance with him but I purloin either a leg or a wing from him.

For

For this design of mine I find it also very proper to write at home, in a wild country, where nobody assists or relieves me, where I seldom see a man that understands the Latin of his Pater-noster, or as little, if so much of the French. I might have performed better elsewhere, but then the work would not have been so much my own; its chief aim and perfection being to be exactly mine. I should be apt enough to correct some accidental errors, of which I am full, as I write on inadvertently; but as for my common and constant imperfections it would be a kind of treason to expunge them. When any one tells me, or I say to myself, "Thou are too full of figures; "that is a word of the Gascon growth; that is a danger- "ous phrase (I do not reject any that are used in the com- "mon streets of France; it is mere jest to think of oppos- "ing custom with grammar) that is an ignorant discourse; "a paradoxical sentence; that there is too silly; you of- "ten make yourself merry; it will be thought you say a "thing in good earnest, which you only speak in jest." Very true, say I; but I correct the errors of inadvertency, not those of custom. Do I not talk at the same rate throughout? Do not I represent myself to the life? It is enough I have done what I designed. Every body discovers me in my book, and my book in me.

Why he chose to write at home, where he had none to help him.

Now I have an apish imitating quality. When I used to set about writing verses (though I never made any but Latin) they plainly discovered the poet I had read last; and some of my first essays have a taste that is a little exotic. At Paris I speak a language somewhat different from what I do at Montaigne. Whatever I look upon with attention, easily leaves some impression of it upon me. Whatever I examine I make my own, whether a silly countenance, a disagreeable grimace, or a ridiculous way of speaking; and vices most of all, as they seize and stick to me, and will not leave their hold without shaking off. I swear oftner by imitation than humour. A cruel imitation like that of the apes, so terrible in stature and strength, which Alexander met with

Montaigne very apt to imitate.

in a certain country of the Indies, and which it would have been difficult for him to have maſtered any other way. But they afforded him the means, by this their inclination to counterfeit whatever they ſaw done *. For thereby the purſuers learnt to put on ſhoes in their ſight, and to tye them faſt with many knots, to muffle up their heads in caps altogether compoſed of running nooſes, and to make as if they anointed their eyes with glue. Thus did thoſe poor animals employ their mimicking humour indiſcreetly to their own detriment. They glued up their own eyes, hamſtringed, and bound themſelves. The other faculty of mimicking the words and geſture of a perſon purpoſely to raiſe mirth and admiration, is no more in my power than in that of a ſtock. When I ſwear in my own manner, it is only by God, which of all oaths is the moſt ſtrict. ‡ They ſay that Socrates ſwore by his dog; Zeno by that ſame interjection which is at this time in uſe among the Italians, viz. *Cappari*; and Pythagoras † by water and air. I am ſo apt, without thinking of it, to receive theſe ſuperficial impreſſions, that if I had in my youth Sire or Highneſs three days together, I would repeat them a week after, inſtead of Excellency and Lordſhip; and what I ſay one day in ſport and in jeſt, I ſhall repeat next day ſeriouſly. Therefore in writing I am fonder of trite arguments, leſt I ſhould handle them at another's expence. Every ſubject is equally fertile to me. A fly will ſerve me for a ſubject; and it is well if what I have now in hand may not have been undertaken at the command of as rambling a will. Let me begin with that which I like beſt; for the ſubjects are all linked to one another.

* Ælian de Animal. lib. xvii. cap. 25. and Strabo, lib. xv. p. 1023.

‡ Ὤμνυε δὲ (φασὶ) καὶ κάππαριν καθάνερ Σωκράτης τὸν Κύνα, Diogenes Laert. lib. vii. § 32. Capparis is the name of a ſhrub bearing capers; others ſwore by a cabbage, as is the cuſtom in France, even at this day; witneſs the word *vertuchou*, a kind of oath, which ſignifies by the virtue of cabbage; an expreſſion which many peoply make uſe of every now and then.

† Diogenes Laert. in the life of Pythagoras. lib. viii. ſect. 6.

But

He generally produced his profoundest thoughts on a sudden.

But I am vexed that my deepest, and most ridiculous reveries, yet such as please me best, are produced on a sudden, and when I look for them the least; and that they as suddenly vanish, for want of something at that instant to apply them to; be it on horseback, at table, or in bed; though I am most given to think when I am riding.

Did not like to be interrupted as he was speaking.

My speech is a little nicely jealous of attention and silence if I am engaged in a discourse. Whoever then interrupts me puts me to a stand. In a journey the very necessaries wanting on the road break off discourse; besides that I often travel without the company fit for such regular conversation; by which means I have all the leisure I would desire to entertain myself. It falls out to me as it does with my dreams. Whilst I am dreaming I recommend them to my memory (for I am apt to dream that I dream) but next day I may well enough call to mind what complexion they were of, whether gay, or sad, or wild; but what they were as to the rest, the more I strive to recollect, the deeper I plunge it in oblivion. So of thoughts that come accidentally into my head, I have no more than a vain image remaining in my memory; only enough to teaze and vex me in a fruitless search after them.

What love is; how it renders a man ridiculous, and like to the beasts.

Now therefore, laying books aside, and to speak more to the purpose and the truth, I find after all, that love is nothing but the thirst of the enjoyment of it in a desired subject, and that Venus is nothing more than the pleasure of discharging the vessels; like the pleasure that nature gives us in the discharge of the other parts, which becomes vicious by being either immoderate or indiscreet. According to Socrates, love is the appetite of generation by the intervention of beauty. And, having often considered the ridiculous titillation of this pleasure, the absurd, hairbrained, and senseless motions with which it agitates Zeno and Crasippus, the indiscreet rage, the countenance inflamed with fury and cruelty, in the sweetest act of love; and then that sour,

grave, and ecſtatic one in an action ſo wanton; that our delights and our excrements are promiſcuouſly ſhuffled together, and that the higheſt pleaſure is, like pain attended with fainting and complaining, I think it true what Plato ſays, that man was made by the Gods for their ſport *.

——(*quænam iſta jocandi*
Sævitia †?)

What a ſtrange ſporting cruelty is this?

and that it is in deriſion that nature has ordered the moſt common of our actions to be the moſt troubleſome; thereby to make us equal, and to parallel fools and wiſe men, beaſts and us. When I imagine the moſt comtemplative and prudent man, in this ſituation, I think he has conſummate impudence to pretend to be prudent and contemplative. The pride of the peacock is mortified by its legs.

——*ridentem dicere verum,*
Quid vetat ‡?

Why may not truth in laughing guiſe be dreſt?

They who in their ſports baniſh ſerious thoughts, are, ſays one, like the perſon who fears to adore the ſtatue of a ſaint if it be ſtark naked. We eat and drink indeed as beaſts do; but theſe are not actions that obſtruct the functions of our ſoul. In thoſe we maintain our advantage over them. This ſubjects every other thought to it: and, by its imperious authority, makes an aſs of all Plato's divinity and philoſophy, and yet there is no complaint of it. In every thing elſe you may preſerve a ſort of decorum: all other operations ſubmit to the rules of honeſty; this cannot ſo much as in imagination appear other than vicious or ridiculous. Examine if you can therein

* Ἄνθρωπὸν θεῶν τι παίγνιον εἶναι, De Legibus, lib. vii. p. 889.
† Claud. in Eutrop. lib. i. ver. 24, 25. ‡ Hor. ſat. 1. lib. i. ver. 24, 25.

find

find a wife and discreet proceeding. Alexander said, that this performance and sleeping were the chief actions by which he knew himself to be mortal †. Sleep suffocates and suppresses the faculties of our soul; the exercise with the sex absorbs and dissipates them in like manner. Doubtless, it is a mark not only of our original corruption, but also of our vanity and deformity.

Why is love, with which nature inspires us to be condemned.

Nature impels us to it on the one hand, by having attached to this desire the most noble, useful, and pleasant of all her functions; and, on the other hand, she leaves us to accuse and avoid it as a thing insolent and indecent, to blush at it, and to recommend abstinence. Are not we brutes to call that operation brutish which begets us? People of various religions have concurred in several ceremonies, as sacrifices, lamps, burning incense, fastings, oblations, and among others in the condemnation of this action. All opinions center in this, besides the antiquated practice of circumcision. We have perhaps cause to blame ourselves for contributing to so silly a production as man, if we call the act and the parts that are employed in it shameful; as mine are properly so at this time. The Essenians, of whom Pliny speaks, kept up ‡ their nation several ages, without nurses or cradles, by the arrival of foreigners, who, following this pretty humour, came among them continually; a whole nation running the hazard of total extinction, rather than engage themselves in female embraces, and rather to lose a succession of men than to beget one. They say that Zeno ‖ never had to do with a woman but once in his whole life, and then out of civility that he might not be deemed a woman-hater. Every one shuns the sight of a birth; every one runs to see an

† Plutarch, in his Tract of the Means to distinguish the Flatterer from the Friend, chap 23. ‡ "Gens sola, et in toto orbe præter cæteras "mira, sine ullâ fæminâ, omni Venere abdicatâ.—In diem ex æquo con- "venarum turbe renascitur, large frequentibus quos vitâ fessos ad mores "eorum fortunæ fluctus agitat. Ita per sæculorum millia (incredibile "dictu) gens æterna est, in quâ nemo nascitur." Nat. Hist. lib. v. cap. 17. ‖ Diog. Laert. in the Life of Zeno, lib. vii. § 13.

execution. To deſtroy, a ſpacious field is ſought out, and that in the face of the ſun; but to beget, we creep into as dark and cloſe a corner as we can. It is a man's duty to withdraw himſelf from the light to do it; but it is his glory, and the fountain of many virtues, to be able to deſtroy it. The one is an injury, the other a favour; for Ariſtotle ſaid, that to do any one good was, according to a proverb in his country, to kill him. The Athenians, for the ſake of paralleling the diſguſt of thoſe two actions, being to cleanſe the iſland of Delos, and to juſtify themſelves to Apollo, prohibited all births and burials in the precincts thereof. ‡ *Noſtri noſmet pœnitet*; "we are "aſhamed of ourſelves.

There are people who do not care that any ſhould ſee them eat.

There are nations where the people do not love to be ſeen to eat. I know a lady, and of the greateſt quality too, who thinks alſo that chewing gives a diſagreeable air to the face, which takes off much of its grace and beauty; and therefore ſhe does not care to appear in public with an appetite: and I know a man too who cannot bear to ſee another, or be ſeen himſelf to eat; and is more ſhy of company to ſee him in the act of repletion than that of evacuation.

Turkiſh mad men, who are proud to debaſe their own nature.

In the Turkiſh empire there are a great many men, who aiming to be thought more excellent than others, never ſuffer themſelves to be ſeen when they are at their meals, who make but one in a week, who cut and mangle their face and members, and never ſpeak to any one: a frantic people, who think to honour their nature by being unnatural to it, who value themſelves, upon deſpiſing themſelves, and become better by growing worſe. What a monſter is the animal that becomes horrible to himſelf; whoſe delights are his plagues, and who ſticks to misfortune!

‡ Seneca tells his friend Lucilius, in his 115th epiſtle, that he would reap a very conſiderable advantage from philoſophy, viz. that he would never be aſhamed of himſelf; and it is not unlikely that this paſſage ran in Montaigne's head, though he employs it in a ſenſe quite different.

There

There are some who hide themselves as long as they live,

Exilioque domos et dulcia limina mutant;
Atque alio patriam quærunt sub sole jacentem.*

Leaving their native seats, in exile run
To lands that lie beneath another sun.

Men who conceal themselves from sight, and are ingenious in using themselves ill.

stealing from the sight of other men; and avoid health and chearfulness, as qualities that are prejudicial, and enemies to the human being. Not only many sects, but many individuals, curse their birth, and bless their death; and there is a place where the sun is abhorred, and darkness adored. We are only ingenious to use ourselves ill. In quest of this game we employ all our wit, which is a dangerous tool if it be used intemperately.

O miseri quorum gaudia crimen habent ¶!

O wretched man, whose very joys are crimes!

Alas! poor man! thou hast misfortunes enough that are unavoidable, without stretching thy invention to increase them; and art miserable enough by constitution, without being so by art; thou hast real and essential deformities enough, without forging such as are imaginary. Dost thou think thyself too easy in thy circumstances if one half of thy enjoyments does not disquiet thee? Dost thou think that thou hast performed all the necessary offices to which thou art engaged by nature: and that she is idle in thee if thou dost not oblige thyself to new offices? Thou dost not scruple to offend her universal and undoubted laws, and art very tenacious of thy own favourite whimsies, which, the more particular, uncertain, and repugnant they are, the more pains thou dost take in their favour. Thou art attached to the positive laws of thy parish, but those of the world concern thee not. Run but a little over the examples of this kind; thy whole life is full of them.

* Virg. Geo. lib. ii. ver. 511. ¶ Cornel. Gal. elog. 1. ver. 188.

In

To talk discreetly of love only stimulates it the more.

In my opinion, the verses of those two poets, in treating so reservedly and discreetly of lasciviousness, discover it, and lay it fuller in view. The ladies cover their breasts with net-work, as the priests do several sacred things; and painters throw a shade over their works to give them the greater lustre: and the sun and wind are said to strike more violently by reflection than in a direct line. When the Egyptian was asked, what he carried so secretly under his cloak; he gravely answered, it is hid under my cloak §, to the end that thou mightest not know what it is. But there are some other things that are hid only on purpose to be shewn. Hear this man who speaks plainer.

Et nudam pressi corpus adusque meum *.

And in these naked arms of mine
Her naked body I did twine.

Methinks I am emasculated by this expression. If Martial turn up Venus, coats ever so high, he cannot shew her in such perfection. He who says all that might be said, surfeits and disgusts us. He who is afraid to speak out, inclines one to think more of the matter than there is in reality. There is a kind of treachery in this sort of modesty, and especially whilst they half open, as they do, so fair a path to imagination. And both the action and the description must shew they are stolen.

The love of the Spaniards and the Italians; the more respectful and timorous it is, the more agreeable.

The love of the Spaniards and Italians the more respectful and timorous, the more coy and secret it is, the better it pleases me. I know not which of the ancients it was who wished his weasand as long as the neck of a † crane, that he might be the longer in tasting what he swallowed Such a wish would have been more proper in this pleasure, which is so quick and precipitant, especially in such

§ Plutarch, of Curiosity, chap 3. * Ovid. de Amor. lib. i. eleg. 5. ver. 24. ‡ See in Athenæus, lib. i. cap. 6.

natures as mine, which has the fault of being too sudden in its motion. To stop its flight, and delay it with preambles, a wink, a bow, a word, a sign, stand all for favour and recompence betwixt them. Would it not be excellent frugality in him that could dine on the steam of roast-meat?

Love ought to be made gradually, and without precipitation.

It is a passion in which solidity has very little share, but vanity and a feverish dotage much greater; and it must be recompensed and served in the same manner. We teach the ladies to value and esteem themselves, and to amuse and cheat us. We give the last discharge at the first onset. The French impetuosity always attends it. By spinning out their favours, and exposing them in small parcels, even wretched old age finds some share of them, according to a man's value and merit. He who has no fruition but in fruition, who wins nothing unless he sweep the stakes, who only loves the chase for the sake of the quarry, has no business to come to our school. The more steps and gradations there are, the uppermost seat is the higher, and the more honourable. We should take a pleasure in being conducted to it, as is the way in magnificent palaces, by divers porticos and passages, long and pleasant galleries, and by many turnings and windings. This management would redound to our advantage. We should then stay longer and love longer. Without hope, and without desire, our progress is not worth a rush. Our conquest and entire possession is what they ought always to dread. When they surrender themselves up to the mercy of our fidelity and constancy, they run not a little hazard. These are virtues rare and hard to attain to. They are no sooner ours but we are no more theirs.

——— *postquum cupidæ mentis satiatæ libido est,*
Verba nihil metuere, nihil perjuria curant *.

When our desires and lusts once sated are
For oaths and promises we nothing care.

* Catullus de Nuptiis Pelei et Thetidis, carm. 62. ver. 147.

Thra-

Thrasonides, a young man of Greece, was so fond of his amour that, having gained his mistress's heart, he refused to enjoy her, that he might not by fruition consume, quench, and satiate that uneasy passion, of which he boasted, and with which he fed his fancy. The dearness of a dish heightens the relish of it.

Kisses rendered contemptible by being too common in salutes.

Do but observe how much the fashion of saluting, which is peculiar to our nation, does, by the facility of granting them, rob kisses of that charm which Socrates said is so powerful and dangerous for stealing our hearts. It is a disagreeable and offensive fashion for the ladies that they must be obliged to lend their lips to every man that has three footmen to attend him, be his person ever so disgusting.

‖ *Cujus livida naribus caninis*
Dependet glacies, rigetque barba:
* * * * * * * * *
Centum occurrere malo cunnilingis ¶.

Nor are we ourselves at all gainers by the bargain; for as the world is divided we are obiged to kiss fifty ugly faces for three beauties; and to tender stomachs, like those of my age, a bad kiss is too dear a purchase for a good one.

In Italy they passionately court, and even fall into raptures of devotion to the very women who prostitute themselves for money; and justify their conduct by pleading that there are degrees of fruition, and that they pay them so much compliment with a desire of obtaining that fruition which is the most entire. The women only sell their bodies: their wills are too free, and too much their own to be put to sale. Therefore, say these gentlemen, it is the will they aim at, and so far they are in the right. It is the will that must be obliged and managed. I should abhor to think that mine was a body deprived of affection. This madness is, methinks, a-kin to that

‖ Martial. lib. vii. epig. 94. ¶ The Latin is the only language that is so licentious as to convey ideas so gross and nasty. Seneca says it is better to suppress some things in silence, though it be to the detriment of the cause, rather than to transgress the bounds of modesty. Senec. Controvers. lib. i. Controv. 2. towards the end.

of

of the * boy, who longed to ravish the beautiful image of Venus, which was carved by Praxiteles; or that of the furious Egyptian, who violated the dead corpse of a woman that he was embalming; which gave occasion to the law † made afterwards in Egypt, that the bodies of beautiful young women, and those of a good family, should be kept three days before they were put into the hands of those persons who had the charge of their interment. Periander acted more wonderfully, who extended his conjugal affection (more regularly and legal) to the enjoyment of his wife Melissa after she was dead ¶. Does it not seem a lunatic humour in the moon, when she could no otherwise enjoy her darling Endymion, to lay him asleep for several months, and to please herself with the fruition of a boy, who stirred not but in a dream? I likewise say, that to love a body without its consent and without its desire, is to love a body without a soul. All enjoyments are not the same. There are some that are hectic and languishing. A thousand other causes, besides good will, may procure us this grant from the ladies. This is not a sufficient testimony of affection. Treachery may lurk there as well as elsewhere. They go to it sometimes but with half a mind.

Tanquam thura merumque parent ‡,
Absentem marmoreámve putes ‖.

So coldly they the sacrifice prepare,
You'd think they absent, or else marble are.

I know some ladies who had rather lend that than their coach, and who only impart themselves that way. You are to observe whether your company pleases them upon any other account, or only for that same, the endowment of some strong-chined groom; and in what degree of favour you stand with them.

* "Venerem Praxiteles in marmore quasi spirantem in templo Gui-
"diorum collocavit, propter pulchritudinem operis, a libidinoso cujus-
"dam complexu parum tutam." Valer. Max. lib. viii. cap. 11. in Externis § 4. † Herodot. lib. ii. p. 136. ¶ Diog. Laertius, in the Life of Periander, lib. i. § 96. ‡ Mart. lib. xi. ep. 105. ver. 12.
‖ Id. lib. xi. ep 61. ver. 8.

——— *tibi*

—— tibi si datur uni
Quo lapide illo diem candidiore notet †.

Whether thy mistress favour thee alone,
And mark thy day out with the whiter stone.

What if she sops the bread she eats of yours in the sauce of a more pleasing imagination?

Te tenet, absentes alios suspirat amores ‡.

While in her arms intwin'd you don't discover
She pants with longing for an absent lover.

What? Have we not known a man in our own times who made this act subservient to a horrid piece of revenge, by that means to poison and kill an honest woman? They who know Italy will never think it strange if I seek not elsewhere for instances of this kind. For that nation may be called the mistress of the world in this respect. They have generally finer women, and fewer ordinary ones than we; but for uncommon and excellent beauties I reckon that we are upon a par. I form the same judgment of the wits of the common class, of which it is plain that they have many more. Brutality is, without comparison, more uncommon there. As for singular geniuses, and those of the first rate, we are not at all indebted to them. Were I to extend the comparison, I think I might say as to prowess, it is with us popular and natural, contrary to what it is with them; but we have seen it sometimes in their hands to a degree so full and vigorous that it surpasses the greatest instances we have of it.

In France there are as many charming women and men of uncommon merit as in Italy.

The marriages of that country are very unhappy upon this account: their custom commonly imposes so harsh and slavish a law upon their wives, that the most remote acquaintance with a stranger is as great a crime with them as the closest; the consequence

The inconveniencies of the too great restraints in which the Italians keep their wives.

† Catull. ad Manlium, carm. 66. ver. 147. ‡ Tibull. lib. i. el. 6. ver. 35.

of

of which law is, that all reproaches become necessarily substantial; and, since all comes to the same account, they have a very easy choice to make. And, when they have broke down those fences, depend on it they are all on fire, *Luxuria ipsis vinculis, sicut fera bestia, irritata, deinde emissa*; "lust, like a wild beast, being enraged by "being bound, breaks from its chain." It is necessary they should have a little more rein.

Vidi ego nuper equum contra sua frœna tenacem
Ore reluctanti fulminis ire modo *.

I saw, spite of his bit, a head-strong colt
Run with his rider like a thunderbolt.

The desire of company is abated by giving it some liberty. It is a fine custom we have in our nation that our children are admitted into good families, to be entertained and bred up pages as in a school of nobility. And it is looked upon as an incivility and an affront to refuse a gentleman. I have taken notice (for so many families, so many different styles and forms) that the ladies who have chosen to subject the maids of their retinue to the most austere rules, have had no better luck than those who have allowed them greater liberty. There is a necessity for using moderation. A good part of their conduct should be left to their discretion; for when all comes to all, there is no discipline that can totally restrain them. But it is very true, that she who comes off safe and sound from a school of liberty, is more to be trusted than she who comes away sound from a severe and cloistered education.

Modesty necessary to women.

Our ancestors formed the countenances of their daughters to bashfulness and fear (their courage and desires being always alike), we ours to assurance. We understand nothing of the matter. This is the business of the Sarmatian ladies, who are not allowed to lie with a man till they have killed another in battle with their own hands. For me, who have no other demand upon them than that they would give me hearing, it is sufficient if they retain me for council ac-

* Ovid. Amor. lib. iii. eleg. 4. ver. 13, 14.

cording

cording to the privilege of my age. I adviſe them, therefore, as well as my own ſex, to abſtinence; but, if the times we live in will not admit of this, let them be at leaſt diſcreet and modeſt. For as Ariſtippus * is reported to have ſaid to certain young men, that bluſhed at ſeeing him go into a bawdy-houſe, the crime is not in going in, but in not coming out. Let her that has no care of her conſcience, have ſome regard however for her character; and, though ſhe be rotten within, let her carry a fair outſide.

Montaigne's taſte as to the article of love.

I commend a gradation and length of time in the beſtowing of their favours. Plato ſhews that, in all ſorts of love, facility and readineſs are prohibited to the defendants. For the women to yield ſo entirely and raſhly, without fear or wit, diſcovers a greedy appetite, which they ought, with all their art, to conceal. By their orderly and regular deportment in their grant of their favours, they much more whet our deſire, and hide their own. Let them always fly before us; I mean thoſe who wiſh nevertheleſs to be overtaken. They conquer us the better by flight, like the Scythians. In truth, according to the law that nature has impoſed on them, it is not properly their prerogative, either to will or deſire: their part is to ſuffer, obey, and conſent; for which nature has given them a perpetual capacity, which in us is uncertain. They have always their call, to the end that they may be always ready for ours. *Pati natæ* †; "they are born to be paſſive:" and whereas ſhe has ordered that our appetites ſhould be manifeſted by a prominent ſhew and declaration of it, ſhe has cauſed theirs to be hidden and internal, and furniſhed them with parts improper for oſtentation, and ſuch as are merely defenſive. Such proceedings as this that follows muſt be left to the Amazonian licence. Alexander, paſſing through Hyrcania, Thaleſtris, queen of the Amazons, met him with three hundred light-horſe, of her own ſex,

* Diog. Laert. in the life of Ariſtippus, lib. ii. § 69.

† Theſe two words are taken out of Seneca, who, ſpeaking of the women of his time, ſays, that the ſex born of the paſſive gender was as luſtful as that of the active gender, epiſt. 95.

finely

finely mounted and well armed, having left the remainder of a great army that followed her, behind the neighbouring hills; and when she came into his presence, she spoke aloud to him, and said, "That the fame of his victories "and valour had brought her thither to see him, and to "make him an offer of her forces to assist him in his en"terprizes; and that, finding him so handsome, young, "and vigorous, she, who was also perfect in all those qua"lities *, advised him that they might lie together, to "the end that, from the most valiant woman in the world, "and the most valiant man then living, there might here"after spring some great and wonderful issue." Alexander thanked her, and, to give time for the accomplishment of her demand, he stayed there thirteen days, which were spent with as much mirth as possible to welcome so heroic a princess.

Why in love it is wrong for the men to blame the levity and inconstancy of the women.

We are, almost in every instance, unjust judges of their actions as they are of ours. I pay the same acknowledgment to the truth, when it makes against me, as when it is on my side. It is an abominable intemperance that prompts them so often to change, and that hinders them from limiting their affection to any one person whatsoever, as is evident in that goodness, to whom are attributed so many changes, and so many different paramours. But it is true at the same time, that it is contrary to the nature of love, if it be not violent, and contrary to the nature of violence, if it be constant. And they who make it a wonder, who exclaim against it, and make such an inquiry into the causes of this frailty of theirs, as if it were unnatural and incredible, whence happens it that they do not perceive how often they are themselves guilty of the same without any astonishment or miracle at all? It would, perhaps, be more strange to see the passion fixed. It is not

* Diodorus of Sicily, lib. xvii. cap. 16. But this historian does not say that this queen of the Amazons offered Alexander troops, to aid him in his military expeditions: and Quintus Curtius, lib. vi. § 5. says expressly, that Alexander having asked her if she would go to the wars with him, she excused herself by saying, that she had left nobody to be guardian of her kingdom; "Caussata, sine custode regnum reliquisse."

a passion merely corporeal. If there be no end in avarice and ambition, there is no end neither in carnal concupiscence. It exists even after satiety, and it is impossible to prescribe either lasting satisfaction, or end to it. It always longs for something unpossessed; and yet inconstancy is, perhaps, somewhat more pardonable in them than in us. They may plead, as well as we, the inclination to variety and novelty, which is common to both sexes; and secondly they might plead, whether we will admit it or not, that they buy a pig in a poke. Joan, queen of Naples *, caused Andreosso, her first husband, to be hanged at the bars of her window in a halter of gold and silk, wove with her own hand, because that in the matrimonial duties she found he had not the parts, and could not make the efforts answerable to the expectation she had conceived from his stature, beauty, youth, and disposition, whereby she had been caught and deceived. There is more labour required in doing than in suffering; so that they are on their part always at least provided for the supply of our exigency, but it may happen otherwise on our part. For this reason Plato wisely made a law, that before every marriage, in order to prove its fitness, certain judges should view the youths, who claimed it, stark naked, and the women naked too, but not lower than the waist. In their trial of us, perhaps, they do not find us worthy of their choice.

Experta latus madidoque similima loro
Inguina, nec lassâ stare coacta manu
Deserit imbelles thalamos †.

'Tis not enough that the will be good. Impotency and insufficiency are lawful reasons for dissolving a marriage.

* Andrew, the son of Charles king of Hungary, and the husband of Joan I. queen of Naples. The Italians called him Adreosso. As to the tragical death of this prince, see Bayle's Dictionary, in the article of JOAN I. of Naples. † As was the case of Galla mentioned in Martial (lib. vii. ep. 57. ver. 3. &c) who, being dissatisfied with six or seven husbands whom she quitted, was likewise deceived by other husbands equally deficient.

Et

Et quærundum aliunde foret nervoſius illud,
Quod poſſet zonam ſolvere virgineam *.

And why ſhould not ſhe look out for an amorous being more licentious and active according to her own ſtandard?

——ſi blando nequeat ſupereſſe labori †.

The pleaſing labour if he can't perform.

But is it not great impudence to bring our inſufficiency and impotency to the place where we deſire to give pleaſure, and to leave a good opinion and character of ourſelves? For the little that I am able to do now,

——ad unum
Mollis opus ||.

But once a night.

I would not teaze a perſon whom I eſteem and fear to offend,

——fuge ſuſpicari
Cujus undenum trepidavit ætas
Claudere luſtrum §.

Let not your mind indulge ſuſpicious fears
Of him who trembling draws to threeſcore years.

Nature ought to be ſatisfied with having rendered this age miſerable, without expoſing it alſo to ridicule. I hate to ſee it, for one poor inch of pitiful vigour which warms thrice a week, to ſtrut and puſh on with as much eagerneſs as if it had length and ſtrength to perform mighty feats, which end in a mere blaze of flax; and wonder to ſee its violent itching ſo ſuddenly chilled and extinguiſhed. This is an appetite which can be in none but the flower of beautiful youth. If you truſt to nature, expecting ſhe will ſecond that indefatigable, full, conſtant, and magnanimous ardour which is in you, ſhe will certainly

* Catullus ad januam mœhæ cujuſdam, carm. 65. ver. 27, 28.
† Georg. lib. iii. ver. 127. || Hor. epod. lib. xii. ver. 15, 16.
§ Horace, lib. ii. ode 4. ver. 22.

leave you in the lurch. Return it therefore, boldly to some tender, bashful, and ignorant boy, who still trembles under the lash and blushes at it.

Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro
Si quis ebur, vel mista rubent ubi lilia, multâ
Alba rosâ *.

So Indian iv'ry, stain'd with crimson, shows,
Or lilies white, mix'd with the damask rose.

He who can, without hanging down his head for very shame, expect next day to face the disdain of those fair eyes conscious of his fumbling impertinence,

Et taciti fecere tamen convicia vultus †.

——and, tho' she nothing says,
How ill she lik'd my work her look betrays.

he never felt the satisfaction and pride of having tired them, and tarnished their lustre, by the vigorous performance of one active heroic night. When I have observed any one of them to be disgusted with me, I have not presently accused her levity, but have been in doubt if I had not reason rather to find fault with nature, which has certainly treated me very unkindly and unjustly,

(Si non longa satis, si non bene mentula crassa:
Nimirum sapiunt videntque parvum
Matronæ quoque mentulam illibenter ‖).

and done me a most enormous prejudice. Every member I have is equally mine, as much one as another; and no other more properly makes me a man than this.

* Æneid, lib. xii. ver. 67. † Ovid Amor. lib. i. eleg. 7. ver. 21.
‖ Of these three verses the first is the beginning of a sort of epigarm, entituled, Priapus in Veterum Poetarum Catalectis, and the two others are taken from one of the first epigrams of the same book, Ad Matronas, composed of five verses, two of which are parodied by Montaigne.

I ought

Montaigne's apology for the licentiousness of his style.

I ought to give the public my picture entire, with all its lights and shades. The wise part of my lecture wholly consists in truth, liberty, and essence; disdaining to admit those little feigned, common, and provincial rules into the catalogue of its real duties; it is altogether natural, constant, and general; of which civility and ceremony are daughters indeed, but spurious. We are sure we shall have the appearance of vices when we shall have had them in reality. When we have done with these we run full drive upon others, if we find it must be so: for there is danger that we fancy new duties, to excuse our neglect of the natural ones, and so confound them That such is the case, it is visible that in places where mistakes are mischiefs, the mischiefs are only mistakes: that in nations where the laws of decency are most rare and most remiss, the primitive rules of common reason are best observed; such numberless duties stifling and dissipating all our care. The application to trifling things diverts our attention from those which justly require it. What an easy, plausible course do these superficial men take, compared with ours! These are shadows, wherewith we palliate and pay one another. But, instead of paying, we inflame the reckoning towards that great judge, who tucks up our rags and tatters round our pudenda, and thoroughly scrutinizes every part of us, even to those that are the inmost and most secret. It were a decent and useful quality of our virgin modesty, could it prevent this discovery. In fine, he that could reclaim man from so scrupulous a verbal superstition, would do the world no great damage. Our life is divided betwixt folly and prudence. Whoever writes nothing of it but what is reverend and regular, leaves above one half behind. I do not excuse myself to myself; and if I did, it should be rather to apologize for my excuses than for any other fault of mine. I excuse myself as to certain humours which, I think, are more in number than those that I can justify. With regard to them I have also this to say (for I desire to please every body, as hard a matter as it is for a single man, *esse accommodatum ad tantam morum*

ac fermonum et voluntatum varietatem *, "to accommodate "himself to so great a variety of manners, discourses, and "determinations)," that they cannot condemn me for making use of authorities which have been received and approved of for many ages; and that there is no reason that, for want of rhime, they should refuse me the dispensation which they allow even to the churchmen of our nation and time. Of this the two lines that follow are the most signal examples.

† *Rimula, dispeream, ni monograma tua est.*
Un vit d' amy la contente et bien traitte ‡.

What would you think of many others of the like kind? I love modesty; and it is not from judgment that I have chosen this scandalous sort of discourse; it is nature that has chosen it for me. I commend it not any more than all other terms of speaking contrary to received custom; but I excuse it, and, by circumstances, both general and particular, mitigate the accusation.

To pursue this subject: from whence can proceed that usurpation of sovereign authority which you pretend to over those ladies who favour you at their own peril;

Si furtiva dedit migrâ munuscula nocte ||.

If in the silence of the night
She has permitted stoln delight.

Such favourites of the ladies as arrogate to themselves an unreasonable authority over their mistresses blamed for it, and not at all imitated by Montaigne.

so that you presently take upon you the interests coldness, and authority of a husband? It is a free convention; why then do you not stick to it, as you are desirous they should? There is no prescription as to things that are voluntary. It is not the fashion; however, it is certain that I have, in my time, carried on this bargain as far as the na ure of it will admit, as conscien-

* Q. Cic. de petitione consulatus, cap. 14. † As to the too free poems which Beza composed in his youth, they, who are curious in inquiries of this sort, may consult Bayle's Critical Dictionary in the article of BEZA, note x. ‡ Beza, St. Gelasius. || Catull. ad Manlium, carm. 66. ver. 145.

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tiously as any other contract whatsoever, and with some air of justice; and that I never pretended to declare any affection for them but what I really had, and ingenuously discovered to them the decay, strength, and source of it; together with his fits and intermissions. A man does not always hold on in the same pace. I have been so shy of promising, that I fancy my performances have exceeded my promise, and even what I was obliged to do. They have found me faithful, even to the service of their inconstancy; even an inconstancy avowed, and sometimes multiplied. I never broke with them whilst I had the least hold of them; and, what occasion soever they have given me, never broke with them so far as to scorn or hate them. For such privacies, when even obtained upon terms the most scandalous, yet oblige me to some benevolence. I have sometimes discovered a little indiscreet anger and impatience upon their tricks and subterfuges, and in our disputes: for I am, by my constitution, subject to hasty sallies, which, though slight and short, often spoil my market. If at any time they were pleased to take my free thoughts, I have not failed to give them fatherly, but sharp advice, and to pinch them in the sore place. If ever I left them to complain of me, it was rather that they found my love foolishly conscientious in comparison with the modern custom. I have kept my word in things wherein I might easily have been dispensed with. They then surrendered sometimes with reputation, and on such articles of capitulation as they easily suffered to be violated by the conqueror. I have more than once made pleasure, in its greatest effort, truckle to the interest of their honour; and, when reason urged me, have armed them against me; so that they conducted themselves with greater security and gravity by my rules, when they frankly referred themselves to them, than they would have done by their own. I have ever, to my utmost, taken upon myself alone the hazard of our assignations, in order to save them harmless: and have always brought about our interviews by intrigues the most unpleasant and unexpected, that they might be least mistrusted, while yet,

in my opinion, they were the more practicable. They are chiefly open in those places where they think themselves sheltered. Things that are the least feared are the least defended and observed. One may more easily dare what nobody thinks you would dare to do, which, through its difficulty, becomes easy. Never had any man his approaches more impertinently genital. This way of loving is more according to discipline; but who knows better than I how ridiculous and ineffectual it is to our people; yet I shall not repent of it: I have nothing more to lose by it*.

——— *me tabula sacer*
Votiva paries indicat uvida
Suspendisse potenti
Vestimenta maris Deo †.

My votive table makes it plain
That I have quit the briny main,
And now in Neptune's fane my vest
Will shew the evidence confest.

It is now high time to speak out: but perhaps I might say, as I would do at another time, thou talkest idly, my friend. The love of thy time has little correspondence with faith and integrity.

——— *Hæc si tu postules*
Ratione certa facere, nihilo plus agas,
Quàm si des operam, ut cum ratione insanias ‡.

These things should'st thou undertake,
By reason permanent to make;
This will be all thoul't get by it,
Wisely to run out of thy wit.

So, on the contrary, were I to begin, it should certainly be by the same tract, and the progress should be the same, how fruitless soever it might prove. Incapacity and stupi-

* Montaigne would signify by this, that having been exposed by love to many traverses, he had at length extricated himself from that dangerous passion for ever. † Hor. lib. i. ode 5. ver. 13, &c.
‡ Terence Eunuch, act i. scene 1. ver. 16, &c.

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dity are commendable in an action that is not praiseworthy. The farther I deviate from their humour in this, the nearer I approach to my own. As for the rest, in this bargain I did not suffer myself to be totally captivated: I was pleased with it, but did not forget myself. I reserved the little sense and discretion which nature has given me, entire for their service and my own; a little rapture, but no dotage. My conscience was also engaged in it, even to an excess of debauchery; but never so far as to be guilty of ingratitude, malice, and cruelty. I did not purchase the pleasure of this vice at any rate; but contented myself with its proper and simple expence. *Nullum intra se vitium est*; "nothing is in itself a vice *." I hate a stupid, sluggish lazineſs almost as much as I do a crabbed and painful employment. The one pinches me, the other lays me asleep. I like wounds as well as bruises, and cuts as well as dry blows. I found in this commerce, when I was best qualified for it, a just medium betwixt the two extremes. Love is a wakeful, sprightly, and gay agitation. I was not sick nor sorry with it, but warmed; and, moreover, changed by it. There it is necessary to make a stop. It hurts none but fools. A young man asked Panætius ‡, the philosopher, if it was becoming a wise man to be in love: let the wise man look to that, said he, but let not thou and I, who are not so, engage ourselves in an affair of so much agitation and violence as will enslave us to others, and render us contemptible to ourselves. He spoke the truth, that we ought not to trust a passion, so giddy of itself, to a soul that has not fortitude to withstand its assaults, nor to disprove the saying of Agesilaus †, that prudence and love cannot associate. It is, in truth, a vain occupation, indecent, scandalous, and unlawful; but, to carry it on after this manner, I reckon it wholesome, proper to enliven both the body and soul when dull and sluggish. And, in quality of a physician, I would prescribe it to a man of my make and condition, as soon

* Senec. epist. 95. ‡ Senec. epist. 117. † O! how hard a matter is it, said Agesilaus, for a man to be in love and his sober senses at one and the same time! Plutarch in the life of Agesilaus, chap. 4. of Amyot's translation.

as any other recipe whatsoever, to rouze and keep him in vigour when far advanced in years, and to make him dally with the attacks of old age. Whilst we are but in the suburbs of it, and while the pulse yet beats,

Dum nova canities, dum prima et recta senectus,
Dum superest Lachesi quod torqueat, et pedibus me
Porto meis, nullo dextram subeunte bacillo *.

Whilst my grey hairs do just approach in sight,
Whilst my old age is fresh, and stands upright;
Whilst on fate's spinning-wheel remains more thread,
And whilst, without a staff, firm is my tread.

we have need to be prompted, and tickled by some such provocative. Do but observe with what youth, vigour, and gaiety it inspired the sage Anacreon: and Socrates, when he was older than I now am, speaking of an amorous object, "Leaning," said he, "‡ my shoulder to "her shoulder, and touching her head with mine, as we "were reading both together in one book, I perceived, "without jesting, a sudden sting in my shoulder, like "some flea-bite, which crept about me five days after; "and was accompanied with a continual titillation in "my heart." What! did only an accidental touch, and that by the shoulder, raise a heat, and create an alteration in a breast that was chilled and enervated by age; and one too that was the first reformer of the human race! And pray why not? Socrates was a man, and would neither be, nor seem to be any thing else. Philosophy does not combat natural pleasures, provided they be used moderately; and preaches up moderation, but not total abstinence. It raves most against such pleasures as are foreign to nature, and adulterated. It says, that the appetites of the body ought not to be augmented by the mind; and cautions us not to stuff instead of filling the belly, to avoid all enjoyment that may bring

* Juv. sat. iii. ver. 26, &c.
‡ Xenophon's Symposiacs, chap. 4. § 27, 28.

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us to want, and all meats and drinks that create thirst or hunger. So, in the service of love, philosophy prescribes to us to take an object that may purely satisfy the necessity of the body, and not move the soul, which ought to have no share in the fact, but simply to follow and assist the body. But have I not reason to judge that these precepts, which are, I think, however, in other respects a little too severe, are only directed to a body that performs its office; and that for a body in a state of decay, like that of a weak stomach, it is excusable to warm and support it by art; and, by the intervention of the fancy, to restore the appetite and alacrity, because it went off of itself?

Montaigne's opinion that both the body and mind ought to assist each other in the use of pleasure.

May we not say that there is nothing in us, during this terrestrial imprisonment, that is purely either corporeal or spiritual; that we injuriously dismember a man alive; and that it seems but reasonable that we should act as favourably with regard to pleasure as to pain? This was (for example) vehement, even to perfection, in the souls of the saints by repentance: the body had naturally a share therein by the right of its union, and yet might have little share in the cause; nevertheless, they were not contented that the body should barely follow and assist the afflicted soul. They afflicted it by itself with grievous and peculiar torments, to the end that both the body and the soul should strive to plunge man in misery, by so much the more wholesome, as it is more piercing. So, in the pleasures of the body, is it not injustice to deny the soul a share in them, and to say that it must be dragged into them as into some forced and servile obligation and necessity? It is rather her part to hatch and foment them; to present and invite herself to them, the governing part being her prerogative; as it is also her province, in my opinion, in those pleasures that are peculiar to her, to inspire and infuse into the body, all the sensation of them which its condition can admit of; and to study how to make them agreeable and salutary to it. For it is highly reasonable, as they say, that the body should not pursue its appetites to the prejudice of the soul: and why,

is

is it not as reasonable that the soul should not pursue her's to the prejudice of the body?

The advantages that may be reaped from love in an advanced age.

I have no other passion that keeps me in breath. The same effect that avarice, ambition, quarrels, and law-suits have upon other persons, who, like me, are of no particular profession, love would cause to much more advantage. It would render me vigilant, sober, graceful, and careful of my person. It would settle my countenance, so that it could not be spoiled by the crabbed looks of old age, those looks that are so ugly and so lamentable: it would again put me upon solid and wise studies, by which I might render myself more esteemed and beloved, clearing my mind of the despair of itself, and of its use, and making it again acquainted with itself. It would divert me from a thousand uneasy thoughts, a thousand melancholy chagrins, which in activity and an ill state of health bring upon us at such an age. It would, in a dream at least, put fresh warmth into that blood which nature has deserted. It would hold up the chin, and a little stretch out the nerves, as well as add vigour and alacrity to the life of that poor man, who is making large strides towards his dissolution. But I am far from being ignorant that it is a benefit very hard to recover: by weakness and long experience our taste is become more delicate and exquisite. We desire most when we bring least; and are willing to have the most choice when we least deserve to be accepted. From our consciousness of this we are less daring and more diffident; and, considering our condition and theirs, nothing can assure us of being beloved. I am ashamed of myself when in company with those young bucks,

* *Cujus in indomito constantior inguine nervus,*
Quàm nova collibus arbor inhæret †.

* Epod. lib. ode xii. ver. 19, 20. † i. e. "We are always in a capacity of performing well." This is a short paraphase on the distich, by la Fontaine, which those, who do not understand the Latin, must be content with; for the terms, made use of by Horace, convey such gross ideas that we do not chuse to translate them literally.

To

To what end should we carry on our misery where there is such mirth?

Possint ut juvenes visere fervidi
Multo non sine risu,
Dilapsam in cineres facem *.

That youths, in fervent wishes bold,
Not, without laughter, may behold
A torch, whose early fire
Could ev'ry breast with love inflame,
Now faintly spread a sickly gleam,
And in a smoak expire.

They have both strength and reason on their side; let us give way to them; we have nothing more to say for ourselves: and this blossom of springing beauty is not to be touched by hands so stiff with the cold, nor to be dealt with by methods that are purely material. For as the ancient philosopher said to his friend that jeered him because he could not gain the favour of a girl whom he passionately courted, "such new cheese || will not stick "to my hook." It is a commerce that stands in need of relation and correspondence. Other pleasures that we receive are capable of being acknowledged by returns of a different kind; but this is only to be paid with the same coin. Really, in this sport, the pleasure which I give, tickles my imagination more than that which is given to me. Now, as he has not a spice of generosity in him, who can receive pleasure where he gives none, it must needs be a mean soul that desires to owe all, and can be contented to maintain a conversation with persons to whom he is a charge. There is no beauty, grace, or privacy, so exquisite that a man of honour ought to desire upon such terms. If they only can be kind to us out of pity, I had much rather not to live at all, than live upon charity. I would have right to demand it of them, in the style that I saw used in Italy, *Fate ben per*

* Hor. lib. iv. ode 13. ver. 26, &c.
|| Diog. Laertius, in the life of Bion, lib. iv. sect. 47.

voi, "do good for our own ſake;" or in the manner that Cyrus exhorted his ſoldiers: "let him that loves "me, follow me." Conſort yourſelf (I ſhall be told) with women of your own condition, who will, therefore, be more ready to oblige you. O! ſottiſh and inſipid.

——————— nolo
Barbam vellere mortuo leoni.*

I will not twitch a dead lion by the beard.

Xenophon lays it for an objection, and an accuſation againſt Menon †, that none but women that had paſt their bloom, were the objects of his amours. I really take more pleaſure in the bare ſight of the juſt and ſweet mixture of two young beauties, or only contemplating it in my fancy, than to act as a ſecond in ſuch a ſad diſagreeable medley. I leave this whimſical appetite to the emperor Galba ‡, who fancied no fleſh but what was tough and old; and to that poor wretch in Ovid:

O ego dî faciant talem te cernere poſſim,
Charaque mutatis oſcula ferre comis
Amplectique meis corpus non pingue lacertis ‖!

O! would to heav'n I ſuch might thee behold,
To kiſs thoſe locks when thou in years art old,
And thy lank body in my arms infold.

Amongſt the chief deformities, I reckon beauties that are artificial and forced. Emonez, a young wench of Chios, thinking, by her fine head-geer, to acquire the beauty which nature had denied her, went to Arceſilaus ¶, the philoſopher, and aſked him whether it was poſſible for a wiſe man to be in love: "yes truly," replied he, "but

* Mart. lib. ii. epig, 10. ver. 9, 10. † Αὐτὸς (Μενων) Παιδικα εἶχε Θαρυπαν, ἀγενεῖ◎· ὧν γενεῶντα Κύρῳ ἀναβας, lib. ii. cap. 6. § 15. ‡ Suetonius, in the life of Galba, § 22. ‖ Ex Ponto, lib. i. ep. 4. To his wife, ver. 49, 50. ¶ Diog. Laert. in the Life of Arceſilaus, lib. iv. ſect. 34.

"not

"not with an artificial and counterfeit beauty like "thine." The deformity of an avowed old face is not so ugly, in my opinion, as another that is painted, or rather plaistered. Shall I say it without danger of being taken by the collar for it? I do not take love to be properly and naturally in season but in the age next to childhood.

Quem si puellarum insereres choro,
Mille sagaces falleret hospites,
Discrimen obscurum, solutis
Crinibus, ambiguoque vultu *.

Who, plac'd amongst the maids, defies
A skilful stranger's prying eyes,
So smooth his boyish looks appear,
So loose, so womanish his hair.

Nor beauty neither; for, though Homer extends it to the budding of the chin, Plato himself has observed it to be uncommon. And the reason why the sophist Dion called the first down of beards Aristogitons and Harmodians, is notorious. I think that in virility love is a little out of its place, but much more in old age.

Importunus enim transvolat aridas
Quercus †. ——

O'er wither'd oaks the wanton flies.

Margaret, queen of Navarre, like a very woman as she was, extends the advantage of the women to a great length, ordering that thirty years of age should be the season for changing the title of beautiful into that of good woman. The shorter time that we allow to love to keep possession of us, it is so much the better for us. Do but observe its carriage. He is a beardless boy who knows not how they behave in his school contrary to all

* Horace, lib. ii. ode 5. ver. 20, &c. † Horace, lib. iv. ode 13 ver. 9.

order.

order. Study, exercise, and practice, are ways for insufficiency to proceed by. Novices are the regents in that school. *Amor ordinem nescit* *, "love knows no "order." Doubtless, its conduct is more graceful when mixed with inadvertency and trouble. Miscarriages and disappointments give it a spirit and a grace. Provided it be sharp and eager it is no great matter whether it be prudent. Do but observe how it goes staggering, tripping, and playing tricks. To guide it by art and wisdom is putting it in the stocks; and it is cramping its divine liberty to put it into clutches so hairy and callous. For the rest, I have often heard women represent this being as spiritual, and scorn to take any notice of what interest the senses have therein. Every thing is of service to it; but I can say, I have often seen that we have excused the weakness of their understandings for the sake of the beauty of their persons; but I never yet saw, that, for the sake of the beauty of the mind, how sedate and mature soever, the ladies were ever inclined to lend a hand to support a body that was fallen ever so little to decay. Why does not some woman or other take it into her head to make that noble Socratical barter of the body for the mind, purchasing a philosophical and spiritual intelligence and generation, at the price of her thighs, the highest price which she can set upon them? Plato orders, in his laws, that whoever performed any signal and advantageous exploit in war, should not, while it lasted, be denied a kiss, or any other amorous favour, by any woman whatsoever, his deformity or age notwithstanding. What he thinks to be so just in recommendation of military valour, why may it not be the same for the encouragement of any other valour? And why does not some woman take a fancy to forestall her companions in the glory of this chaste love? I may well say chaste,

* Mr. Cotton, in his translation, quotes St. Jerome for this, but does not mention chapter nor page. Anacreon said, long before him, that Bacchus, aided by love, was irregular in his frolics, ode 52. ver. ult.

——*nam*

* ——*nam si quando ad prœlia ventum est*
Ut quondam in stipulis magnus sine viribus ignis
Incassum furit ‡.

For when to join love's battle they engage,
Like fire in straw they vainly spend their rage.

The vices that are stifled in thought are not the worst. to conclude this notable commentary, which has escaped from me in a torrent of babble; a torrent impetuous sometimes, and offensive;

Ut missum sponsi furtivo munere malum
Procurrit casto virginis è gremio:
Quod miseræ oblitæ molli sub veste locatum,
Dum adventu matris prosilit excutitur,
Atque illud prono præceps agitur decursu,
Huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor †.

As a fair apple, by a lover sent
To's mistress for a private compliment,
Which tumbles from the modest virgin's lap,
Where she had quite forgot it, by mishap;
When, starting as her mother opes the door,
And falls out of her garments on the floor!
While as it rolls and she betrays surprize,
A guilty blush her fair complexion dyes.

I say that males and females are cast in the same mold; and that education and custom excepted, the difference between them is not great. Plato calls upon both sexes indifferently to associate in all the studies, exercises, offices, and professions, military and civil, in his Republic. And the philosopher Antisthenes § says, "the virtue of both is the same." It is much more easy to accuse one sex, than to excuse the other, according to the proverb, which says, "Vice corrects sin".

* Georg. iii. ver. 97. ‡ The application which Montaigne here makes of Virgil's words is very extraordinary, as will appear immediately to those who will be at the pains consulting the original. † Catull. ad Hortalum, carm. 63. ver. 19, &c. § Diog. Laert. in the life of Antisthenes, lib. vi. § 12.

CHAP. VI.

Of Coaches.

IT is very easy to make it appear that great authors, when they treat of causes, not only mention those which they judge to be the true causes, but those also which they think are not so; provided they have any invention or beauty to recommend them. If what they say be ingenious, it is true and useful enough. We cannot be positive what is the chief cause, and, therefore, muster up several to see if it may not accidentally be amongst them.

——Namque unam dicere causam
Non satis est, verùm plures unde una tamen sit *

And thus my muse a store of causes brings;
For here, as in a thousand other things,
Tho' by one single cause th' effect is done,
Yet since 'tis had a thousand must be shown
That we may surely hit that single one.

Will you ask me whence comes the custom of blessing those who sneeze? We produce wind three several ways; that which sallies from below is filthy; that which is vented by the mouth bears some reproach of gluttony; the third eruption is sneezing, which because it comes from the head, and is without offence, we give it this civil reception. Do not laugh at this crafty distinction; for they say it is Aristotle's. I think I had read in Plutarch (who, of all the authors I know, is he who has best mixed art with nature, and judgment with science) giving for a reason of the rising of the stomach in those who go to sea, that it is occasioned by their fear; he having found out some reason, by which he proves that fear is capable of producing such an effect ‡. I, who am very much subject to this effect, know very well that it is not

* Lucret. lib. vi. ver. 703. ‡ In a tract, intitled, Natural Causes, chap. 11. Ψυχὴ σκλον ἔχουσα καὶ θορυβουμενη συγκινεὶ καὶ ἀναπίμπησι τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταραχῆς.

owing

owing to this cause; and I know it not by argument, but by unavoidable experience. Without instancing what I have been told, that the same thing often happens to the beasts, especially to swine, when free from any apprehension of danger; and what an acquaintance of mine has told me of himself, that, being very subject to it, his inclination to vomit has gone off two or three times, being terrified to a great degree in a violent storm: as it happened to that ancient, who said, *Pejus vexabar quàm ut periculum mihi succureret* *; "I was too much disordered "for the apprehension of danger to relieve me." I never was afraid upon the water; nor indeed, elsewhere (and have often had just reasons for fear, if death be such a cause) so as to be disturbed and change countenance. Fear springs sometimes as well from want of judgment as from want of courage. All the dangers which I have been in I have looked upon, without winking, with a free, solid, and entire countenance; and besides, to be afraid requires courage. It has formerly served me better than other courses, so to conduct and regulate my flight, that it was, if not without fear, yet without terror and astonishment. It was stirred indeed, but without amazement or stupefaction. Great souls go much farther, and represent flights, not only calm and temperate, but, moreover, intrepid. We will mention that which Alcibiades ‡ relates of Socrates, his companion in arms; "after our ar- "my was routed, I found him and Lachez in the very rear "of those who fled, and viewed him at my leisure, and "in security, for I was mounted on a good horse and he "on foot; and thus we had fought. I took notice in "the first place with what deliberation and resolution he "fought, compared with Lachez, and then the gallan- "try of his step nothing different from his ordinary gait, "his firm and regular countenance, viewing and judging "what passed about him, looking one while on those, "and another while upon other friends and enemies, af- "ter such a manner as encouraged the one, and signified

* Senec. ep. 53. ‡ Plato in his Banquet, p. 1206. of the Francfort edit. in 1602.

" to the other, that he would ſell his life dear to any on
" that offered to take it from him; and ſo they ſaved
" themſelves, for ſuch men are not ſo liable to be at-
" tacked as thoſe who run away are to be purſued."
That was the teſtimony of this great commander, which teaches us what we experience every day, that nothing throws us ſo much into dangers as an inconſiderate eagerneſs to keep clear of them. * *Quo timoris minus eſt, eo minus ferme periculi eſt*; "where there is the leaſt fear, there
" is generally the leaſt danger." When a man is ready to declare that he thinks of death, and foreſees it, our people are in the wrong to ſay that therefore he is afraid of it. Our foreſight of the good or ill that affects us, is equally proper for us. To conſider and judge of danger is, in ſome ſort, the reverſe of being aſtoniſhed at it. I do not find myſelf ſtrong enough to ſuſtain the ſhock and impetuoſity of this paſſion of fear, or of any other that is vehement. If I was once conquered and beaten down by it, I ſhould never riſe again entire. Whoever ſhould once make my ſoul loſe its footing, would never reſtore it to its right place. It ſearches, and probes itſelf too deeply and too much to the quick, and would never ſuffer the wound it had received to be cloſed and ſkinned over. It has been well for me that no ſickneſs has yet diſmounted it. Every attack made upon me I oppoſe with a high hand; by which means the firſt that ſhould rout me would put it out of my power ever to rally again. I have no after-game to play. On which ſide ſoever the inundation breaks my banks, I lie open, and am drowned without remedy. Epicurus ſaid, that a wiſe man can never turn fool; and I have an opinion the reverſe of this ſentence, that he who has been once an arrant fool, will never after be very wiſe. God gives me cold according to my cloathing, and paſſions proportionable to the ſtrength I have to bear them. Nature having laid me open on the one ſide, has covered me on the other. She has diſarmed me of ſtrength, but has armed me with inſenſibility, and an apprehenſion that is either moderate or dull. I have not for ſome time (and much leſs when

* Titus Livy, lib. xxii. cap. 5.

I was

I was young) been reconciled to a coach, litter, or boat; and hate all other riding but on horſeback, both in town and country. But to me a litter is more intolerable than a coach, and for the ſame reaſon I had rather be toſſed upon the water, ſo as to give me fear, than be rocked in a dead calm. By the little jerks I feel from the oars ſtealing the veſſel from under me, I find both my head and ſtomach diſordered I know not how, ſince I cannot endure that my ſeat ſhould tremble. When the ſail, or current of the water, keeps us upright, or when we are in tow, that regular agitation gives me no uneaſineſs. It is an interrupted motion that offends me, and moſt of all when it is moſt languid; I know not how to expreſs it otherwiſe. The phyſicians have ordered me to ſqueeze and gird the bottom of my belly with a napkin as a remedy; which, however, I have not tried, being accuſtomed to ſtruggle with my own infirmities, and to overcome them by myſelf.

The uſe of coaches in battle.

Did my memory ſerve me, I would not think my time ill ſpent in ſetting down here the infinite variety that we find in hiſtories as to the uſe of chariots in the ſervice of war; various according to the nations, and according to the ages; and, in my opinion, of great effect and neceſſity, inſomuch that it is a wonder we have loſt all knowledge of them. I will only ſay this, that very lately, in the time of our fathers, the Hungarians made very advantageous uſe of them againſt the Turks; every one of them having a targeteer and a muſqueteer, and a number of harquebuſiers ready charged, and all covered with a target-fence, like that which defends the rowers in a galley. They ſet three thouſand ſuch chariots in the front of their battle, and, after their cannon had played, made them all pour in their ſhot upon the enemy, and force them to ſwallow that diſcharge, before they taſted of the reſt, which was no little advance; or elſe they drove the ſaid coaches into their ſquadrons to break and open a paſſage through them; beſides the uſe which they might make of them in a dangerous place to flank the troops marching into the field, or to cover a

lodgment ſpeedily, and fortify it. In my time a gentleman, in one of our frontier places, who was unweildy, and could procure no horſe able to carry his weight, having a quarrel upon his hands, rode through the country in a chariot of this faſhion, and found great convenience in it. But we will leave theſe military chariots.

The uſe of coaches for luxury.

The laſt kings of our firſt race, as if their effeminacy had not been ſufficiently manifeſt by other proofs of it *, travelled through the country lolling in a chariot drawn by four oxen. Mark Anthony was the firſt that ‡ cauſed himſelf to be drawn at Rome by lions harnaſſed to his coach, in which a ſinging wench rode with him. Heliogabalus did as much afterwards, calling himſelf Cybele, the mother of the gods †, and was alſo drawn by tygers, counterfeiting the god Bacchus; he alſo one while harneſſed a brace of ſtags to his coach, at another time four dogs, and at another four whores, by whom he was drawn in ſtate, both himſelf and they ſtark naked. The emperor Firmis cauſed his coach to be drawn by oſtriches of a prodigious ſize, ſo that it ſeemed rather to fly than run upon wheels ‖.

Extravagant expences unbecoming in a prince.

The ſtrangeneſs of theſe inventions puts this other fancy into my head, that it is a kind of puſillanimity in monarchs, and a proof that they are not ſufficiently ſenſible

* Mr. Cotton, by not adverting to a tranſpoſition made here by his author, has been deceived in his meaning, and begins the paragraph thus, "As if the inſignificancy of coaches had not been ſufficiently "known by better proofs," &c. This miſtake of ſo able a tranſlator, has obliged me to explain this paſſage, which is liable to be miſunderſtood alſo by many others. I ſhall only add, that this kind of tranſpoſition, in which all the difficulty lies, being very familiar to Montaigne, his tranſlator ought to be well acquainted with it. As every man has his particular gait and tone of voice, ſo every author has his peculiar ſtyle. If a tranſlator duly conſiders, before hand, the turn, the manners, and, as one may ſay, the very ſteps of his original, he would often underſtand it by half a word; but if he neglect to make it familiar to him, by contenting himſelf with a vague underſtanding of it that is merely grammatical, he will every now and then make the author, whom he tranſlates, ſpeak the very contrary to what he means; and generally, inſtead of entering into the ſpirit of his author, will only expreſs his meaning in a very imperfect manner. ‡ Plutarch, in the life of Mark Anthony, chap. 3. † Ælius Lampridius, p. 110, 111. Hiſt. Auguſt.

‖ Flavii Vopiſci Firmus, p. 244. Hiſt. Auguſt.

what

what they are, when they court honour, and affect a grand appearance by exceſſive expence. It were, indeed, excuſable when in a foreign country; but when a prince is among his own ſubjects, where he may do what he liſt, it derogates from his dignity, which is the higheſt degree of honour that he is capable of attaining to. So methinks, it is ſuperfluous in a private gentleman to go finely dreſſed at home, ſince his houſe, his retinue, and his table, anſwer ſufficiently for him. The advice that Iſocrates gives to his king ſeems to be grounded upon reaſon, viz. that he ſhould he ſplendid * in his furniture and utenſils, as it is an expence in what is durable, and will paſs to his ſucceſſors; and that he ſhould avoid all ſorts of magnificence which ſoon grow out of faſhion, and are forgot. I loved to go fine when I was a younger brother, for want of other ornament, and it became me well. There are ſome people upon whom fine cloaths are an eye-ſore. We have admirable ſtories of the frugality of our kings with reſpect to their perſons and gifts: kings that were great in reputation, merit, and fortune. Demoſthenes pleads ſtrenuouſly againſt the law of the city that aſſigned the public money for the pomp of their games and feſtivals. He would have their grandeur diſplayed in a number of ſhips well equipped, and good armies well provided for: and Theophraſtus ‡ is juſtly to be blamed, who, in his book of Riches, has eſtabliſhed a contrary opinion, and maintains that an expence of this nature is the true fruit of opulence. Theſe are pleaſures, ſays Ariſtotle †, that only affect the loweſt claſs of the people, that vaniſh from their remembrance as ſoon as they are glutted with them, and of which no ſerious and judicious man can have any eſteem ‖. Such expence would, in my opinion, be much more royal, as well as more uſeful, juſt, and durable, in ports, docks,

* Orat. ad Nicoclem, p. 32. Paris edit. for John Libert, anno 1621.

‡ The author of this cenſure was Cic. de Offic. lib. ii. cap. 16. where he ſays, "Miror quod in mentem venerit Theophraſto, in eo libro quem "de divitiis ſcripſit; in quo multa præclare, illud abſurdè. Eſt enim "multus in laudandâ magnificentiâ, et apparatione popularium munerum; taliumque ſumptuum facultatem fructum divitiarum putat."

† All this is alſo taken from Cic. de Offic. lib. ii. cap. 16.

‖ And this likewiſe, ibid. cap. 17.

walls, and fortifications; in ſumptuous fabrics, churches, hoſpitals, colleges, the repair of ſtreets and highways; for which the memory of pope Gregory XIII. will be reverend to late poſterity; and wherein our queen Katharine would manifeſt her natural generoſity and magnificence to ſucceeding ages, if ſhe had it as much in her power, as ſhe has it at heart. Fortune has vexed me much by interrupting the fine ſtructure of the Pont-neuf of our great city, and depriving me of the hopes of ever ſeeing it finiſhed.

The people are diſguſted with it, and not without reaſon.

Moreover, the ſubjects, who are ſpectators of theſe triumphs, are apt to think that the riches diſplayed before them are their own, and that they are entertained at their own coſt. For the people are ready to preſume of kings as we do of our ſervants, that they ought to take care to provide us abundantly with all that we want; but that they ought not to finger any part of it themſelves. And, therefore, the emperor Galba being pleaſed with the performance of a certain muſician who played to him at ſupper, called for his coffer, and gave him a handful of crowns which he took out of it, with theſe words, "this is not the public money, but my "own." But ſo it is that the people are moſt commonly in the right, and that their eyes are fed with what they had once to feed their bellies.

Whether liberality well becomes a king, and to what degree.

Liberality itſelf ſhines not with its true luſtre in a ſovereign hand. It beſt becomes private people; for, to conſider the matter nicely, a king has nothing properly his own; and he owes even himſelf to others. Juriſdiction is not granted in favour of the magiſtrate, but of the people that become ſubject to it. A ſuperior is never created ſuch for his own profit, but that of the inferior; and a phyſician for the ſick perſon, not for himſelf. All magiſtracy, as well as every art or myſtery, is deſigned for external application. * *Nulla ars in ſe verſatur*, "no art is confined "within

* Cicero has theſe words, "ſemper illud extrà eſt quod arte compre- "henditur. Nihil opus eſt exemplis hoc facere longius; eſt enim perſpicuum

"within itself." Therefore the governors of young princes, who study to imprint this virtue of liberality on their minds, and preach to them to deny nothing, and to reckon nothing so well laid out as what they give (a lesson which I have known to be very much in vogue) either have more regard to their own profit than that of their sovereign, or do not well understand whom they speak to. It is a very easy matter to imprint liberality in the person who has as much as he will to supply it with at the expence of another. And the estimate of it not being formed according to the value of the present, but upon the wealth of the giver, it dwindles to nothing in such able hands. They become prodigal before they are liberal: and yet their liberality is but of small recommendation compared with the other royal virtues; yet it is the only one, as Dionysius said, that suits well with tyranny itself. I would rather teach him that verse of the ancient husbandman,

Τῇ χειρὶ δεῖ σπείρειν, ἀλλὰ μὴ ὅλῳ τῷ θυλακῷ *,

"That whoever hopes for a good crop, must sow with "his hand, and not pour the seed out of the bag." The grain should be scattered, and not cast on the ground in heaps; and that since he is to give, or rather pay and make amends to so many people, according to their deserts, he ought to distribute with justice and deliberation. If the bounty of a prince be without discretion, and without measure, I had rather he were covetous.

"spicuum *nullam artem in se versari* sed esse aliud artem ipsam, aliud "quod propositum sit arti." De Finib. Bon. et Mal. lib. v. cap. 6. How happy would be the subjects of Persia, Indostan, &c. if their princes and ministers had the wisdom and virtue to draw from this great principle the conclusion which naturally flows from it, and which Montaigne here points out to them?

* This maxim Montaigne has quoted from a small tract of Plutarch, entitled, Whether the Athenians were more excellent in Arms than in Learning, chap. 4. where Corinna makes use of it to convince Pindar that he had in one of his poems inserted too many fables.

The

What is properly the truly royal virtue, and that ought to accompany the bounty of kings.

The virtue of royalty seems to consist most in justice; and of all the parts of justice, that best denotes the king, which accompanies his liberality; for this they have particularly reserved to their own province, whereas all other justice they remit to the administration of others. Lavish bounty is a very weak means to acquire them good will; for it disgusts more people than it brings over to them. † *Quo in plures usus fis, minus in multos uti possis.—Quid autem est stultius, quàm, quod libenter facias, curare, ut id diutiùs facere non possis?* "The more you dispense to some, the less you "will be able to dispense to many: and what greater "folly can there be than to order it so, that what you "are heartily inclined to do, you put it out of your "power to perform long?" And if it be conferred without regard to merit, it puts him to the blush who receives it, and is received with an ill grace. Tyrants have been sacrificed to the hatred of the people by the hands of those very men whom they have unjustly advanced; such kind of men thinking to secure to themselves the possession of benefits unduly received, if they discover a contempt and hatred of him from whom they derived them; and in this they join with the common judgment and opinion.

It is not in the power of a prince to satisfy the cravings of his subjects.

When a prince makes exorbitant grants, his subjects make exorbitant demands, and accommodate themselves not to reason, but example. We have reason, certainly, very often to blush at our own impudence. We are over-paid, according to justice, when the recompence equals our service; for do not we owe something to our prince by natural obligation? If he bears our expence he does too much; it is enough that he contributes to it: the overplus is called a benefit which cannot be demanded, for the very name of liberality founds of liberty. As we use it there is no end of it. We never reckon what we have received. We are only for that liberality which is to come. For which reason, the

† Cicero de Offic. lib. ii. cap. 15.

more

more a prince exhausts himself in giving, the poorer he becomes in friends. How should he satisfy those longing appetites, which the more they are fed the more they crave? He whose thoughts are bent upon grasping, never more thinks of what he has grasped. There is nothing so peculiar to covetousness as ingratitude.

Example of the liberality of a prince, from whence princes may learn to bestow their gifts properly.

The example of Cyrus will not do amiss in this place, to serve the kings of the age as a touchstone, to know whether their bounties are well or ill bestowed, and to shew them how much better that emperor proportioned them than they do. By this means they are reduced afterwards to borrow of their unknown subjects; and rather of them to whom they have done wrong, than of those to whom they have done good; and so receive aids from them, wherein there is nothing of a Free Gift but the name. Cræsus reproached him for his largess, and † cast up how much his treasure would have amounted to if he had been closer fisted. Cyrus longed to justify his liberality, and therefore sent dispatches into all parts to the grandees of his dominions, whom he had particularly advanced, requesting every one of them to assist his necessity with as much money as he could spare, and to send it to him with a note of the sums. When all the bills were brought to him every one of his friends, not thinking it enough to offer him only so much as he had received from his bounty, and adding to it a great deal of his own ‡, it happened that this sum amounted to much more than if he had been as frugal as Cræsus would have had him: whereupon Cyrus said ‖, "I am as much in love with riches as other "princes, but rather a better manager. You see with "what a small deposit I have gained the inestimable trea-"sure of so many friends, and how much more faithful "treasurers they are to me then mercenary men would be "without obligation, without affection; and that my "cash is better lodged than in chests, which would bring

† In Xenophon's Cyropædia, lib. 8. § 9. ‡ Ibid. § 10. Δίγεται δὲ λοχιζόμενος ὁ Κροῖσος πολλαπλάσια εὑρεῖν, ἢ ἔφη Κύρῳ ἂν εἶναι ἐν τοῖς θησαυροῖς ἤδη, εἰ συνέλεγεν. ‖ Ibid. § 11.

"upon

" upon me the hatred, envy, and contempt of other " princes."

The expences of the emperors at the public spectacles why not justifiable.

The emperors alleged the dependency of their authority in some measure (at least in appearance) on the good will of the Roman people, as an excuse for the superfluity of their plays and public spectacles; they having been accustomed at all times to be humoured with such extravagant shows, and entertainments. But they were private men who had brought up this custom to gratify their fellow-citizens and companions by such profusion and magnificence, chiefly at their own expence; the custom had quite another taste when it came to be kept up by the sovereigns. *Pecuniarum translatio a justis dominis ad alienos non debet liberalis videri*†; " the transferring of money from the right owners to " others ought not to be deemed liberality."

Alexander reproved by his father for endeavouring to gain the affection of the Macedonians by presents.

Philip perceiving that his son went about to gain the affection of the Macedonians by presents, reprimanded him in a letter, after this manner, viz. " What " could mislead you to think that those " will be faithful to you whom thou hast " bribed with money? Have you a " mind that the Macedonians should look upon you not " as a sovereign, but as their cash-keeper and corrupter? " If you would practise upon them, do it by the good " deeds of virtue, and not by bounty from thy coffers ‡."

A digression touching the magnificence of the spectacles with which the Roman emperors entertained the people.

It was, however, a fine thing to bring to the theatre, and therein plant a great number of large trees, with all their branches in full verdure, representing a great shady forest, beautifully disposed in just symmetry; and, on the first day, to throw into it a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, a thousand boars, and as many fallow-deer, and abandon them to the prey of the people; and the next day to cause a hundred great lions, as many leopards, and three

† Cicero de Offic. lib. i. cap. 14. ‡ Cicero de Offic. lib. ii. cap. 15.

hundred

hundred bears to be knocked on the head in his presence; and, on the third day, to make three hundred couple of gladiators fight in earneſt; all which was done by the emperor Probus. It was alſo very fine to ſee thoſe vaſt amphitheatres caſed with marble, curiouſly ſet off with figures and ſtatues, and the inſide ſhining with rare decorations.

Baltheus en gemmis, en illita porticus auro.*

Behold a belt, with jewels glorious made,
And a brave portico with gold o'erlaid.

All the ſides of this great ſpace filled and environed, from the bottom to the top, with ſixty or eighty rows of ſeats, all of marble alſo, and covered with cuſhions,

——— *exeat, inquit,*
Si pudor eſt, et de pulvino ſurgat equeſtri,
Cujus res legi non ſufficit †.

They who by law can't make a title fit,
Let ſuch, for ſhame, th' equeſtrian cuſhion quit.

where an hundred thouſand ſpectators might ſit at their eaſe; and to make the ſtage, where the plays were performed, firſt open by art, and to cleave into chaſms repreſenting dens, from which iſſued out the beaſts deſigned for the ſpectacle; and then, ſecondly, to bring a deluge of water upon the ſtage, carrying ſea-monſters, and ſhips of force to repreſent a ſea-fight; and, thirdly, to drain and dry the ſtage again for the combat of the gladiators; and, for the fourth ſcene, to have the ſtage ſtrewed

* I know not what is ſtrictly to be underſtood here by the word *baltheus*. In the amphitheatres this term was applied to certain ſteps that were higher and wider than the others, as may be ſeen in the Antiquities of Father Montfaucon, tom. III. part ii. p. 256. Father Tachart, in his Latin and French Dictionary, ſays, that the word is uſed by Vitruvius to denote a belt or girdle round the bottom and top of a column. Whether jewels would make a better figure there than on Montfaucon's ſteps, I leave to the determination of the connoiſſeurs.

† Calphurnius, eclog. 7. entitled Templum.

‡ Juv. ſat. 3. ver. 153.

with

with vermilion and ſtorax; inſtead of ſand, there to make a ſolemn feaſt for all that vaſt multitude of people; which is the laſt act of one day only.

——— quoties nos deſcendentis arenæ
Vidimus in partes, ruptáque voragine terræ
Emerſiſſe feras, et iiſdem ſæpe latebris
Aurea cum croceo creverunt arbuta libro.
Nec ſolum nobis ſilveſtria cernere monſtra
Contigit, æquoreos ego cum certantibus urſis
Spectavi vitulos, et equorum nomine dignum,
Sed deforme pecus *.

How often, when ſpectators, have we ſeen
Part of the ſpacious theatre ſink in,
And, from a ſudden chaſm in the earth,
Start up wild beaſts: then preſently give birth
Unto a ſhining grove of golden bow'rs,
Of ſhrubs that bloſſom'd with enamell'd flow'rs?
Nor yet of ſylvan monſters had we ſight
Alone; I ſaw ſea-calves with wild bears fight;
And a deformed ſort of cattle came,
Which river or ſea-horſes we might name.

Sometimes they have made a high mountain riſe full of fruit-trees, and others of verdure; from the tops of which trickled down a current of water, as from the mouth of a fountain. One while a great ſhip came rolling in, which opened and divided of itſelf; and, after having diſgorged from its hold four or five hundred beaſts for fight, cloſed again, and diſappeared of itſelf. At other times, from the bottom of this ſtage, they cauſed ſweet-ſcented waters to ſpout upwards, and dart their threads to ſuch a prodigious height as to ſprinkle and perfume the vaſt multitude of ſpectators. Then, to defend themſelves from the wind, rain, or heat, they had that huge fabric covered over with purple curtains of needle-work, or of ſilk of va-

* Calphurn. eclog. 7. ver. 64 to 72.

rious

rious colours, which they could either draw or undraw as they pleased.

Quamvis non modico caleant spectacula sole
Vela reducuntur cum venit Hermogenes *.

The curtains, tho' the sun does scorch the skin,
Are, when Hermogenes ‡ appears, drawn in.

The net-work also, that was set before the people to defend them from the fury of those wild beasts, was of gold-tissue,

—— *auro quoque torta refulgent* †.
Retia.

And woven nets refulgent are with gold.

If there be any thing excusable in extravagancies of this kind, it is where the invention and novelty furnish admiration, and not the expence. In the same vanities we discover how fruitful those ages were in wits of a different kind from ours. It fares with this sort of fertility as it does with all other productions of nature. Not that she therein employed her utmost effort at that time. We do not travel, we rather roam up and down, and whirl this way and that; and tread the same ground over again. I am afraid our knowledge is weak in every respect. We do not look far, and scarce at all behind us. Our understanding comprehends little, and exists but a little while, it being short, not only in extent of time, but of matter.

* Martial. lib. xii. ver. 15, 16.

‡ This Hermogenes was an arrant thief, and they took down the curtains for fear he should find some means or other to steal them away.

† Calphurnius, elog. 8. entitled Templum, ver. 53.

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi, sed omnes illacrymabiles
Urgentur, ignotique longâ
Nocte *.

Before great Agamemnon reign'd,
Reign'd kings as great as he, and brave;
Whose huge ambition's now contain'd
In the small compass of a grave:
In endless night they sleep, unwept, unknown.

‡ *Et supera bellum Thebanum et funera Trojæ,*
Multi alias alii quoque res cecinere poetæ †.

And long before the wars of Thebes and Troy,
On other things bards did their song employ.

Solon's account of what he had learnt from the Egyptian priests, of the long duration of their state, and of their way of learning and preserving foreign histories, is not, methinks, a testimony to be slighted upon this consideration. ¶ *Si interminatam in omnes partem magnitudinem regionum videremus* et temporum, *in quam se injiciens animus et entendens, ita late longeque peregrinatur, ut nullam oram ultimi videat, in qua possit insistere: in hac immensitate——infinita vis innumerabilium*, appareret *formarum* ‖; "could we see that boundless extent of "countries and ages, in all their parts, on which "the mind being fixed and intent, might ramble "where and when it list, without meeting with "any limits to its sight, we would discover in-"numerable forms in that immensity." Though all

* Horace, lib. iv. ode 9. ver. 25, &c. ‡ Montaigne diverts himself here in giving Lucretius' words in this distich, a construction directly contrary to what they bear in that poem. † Lucret. lib. v. ver. 327, &c. ¶ Here also Montaine puts a sense quite different from what the words bear in the original; but the application he makes of them is so happy that one would declare they were actually put together only to express his own sentiment. "Et temporum" is an addition by Montaigne, and, instead of "infinita vis innumerabilium appareret formarum," it is in Cicero "infinita vis innumerabilium volitat atomorum." These two last are sufficient to shew that Cicero treats of quite another thing than what Montaigne does here.

‖ Cic. de Natura Deorum, lib. i. cap. 20.

that

that is arrived to our knowledge of the time paſt ſhould be true, and known by any one perſon, it would be leſs than nothing compared with what is unknown. And of this very image of the world, which glides away while we are in it, how ſcanty and contracted is the knowledge of the moſt curious inquirers? Not only of particular events, which fortune often renders exemplary and important, but of the ſtate of great governments and nations, not above a hundredth part has reached our knowledge. We make a parade of the wonderful invention of our great guns, and of our printing, which other men, at the other end of the world, in China, enjoyed a thouſand years before us. Did we but ſee as much of the world as we do not ſee, it is probable we would perceive a perpetual multiplication and viciſſitude of forms. There is nothing ſingle and rare in reſpect to nature, nor, indeed, with regard to our knowledge, which is a wretched foundation for our rules, and fondly preſents us with a very falſe image of things. As we, now-a-days, vainly infer the world to be in a ſtate of declenſion and decrepitude by the arguments we draw from our own weakneſs and decay,

Jamque adeò affecta eſt ætas, effœtaque tellus †.

So much the age, ſo much the earth decays.

In like manner did he, of old, vainly conjecture the birth and youth of the world, by the vigour he obſerved in the wits of his time abounding in novelties, and the invention of divers arts.

Verùm, ut opinor, habet novitatem ſumma, recenſque
Natura eſt mundi, neque primum exordia cœpit:
Quare etiam quædam nunc artes expoliuntur,
Nunc etiam augeſcunt, nunc addita navigiis ſunt
Multa ‡.

But ſure the nature of the world is ſtrong,
And, ſince it firſt began, it can't be long;

† Lucret. lib. ii. ver. 1150. ‡ Lucret. lib. v. ver. 331, &c.

The reaſon, why I think ſo, is, we know
That arts increaſe, and ſtill politer grow;
And many things, from former times conceal'd,
Are by extenſive commerce new reveal'd.

Of the new world, and the genius of its inhabitants when it was firſt diſcovered.

This world of ours has lately found out another (and who will aſſure us that this is the laſt that will be diſcovered, ſince the Dæmons, the Sibyls, and We too were, till now, quite ignorant of it) altogether as big populous, and fruitful as this; and yet ſuch a novice, ſo much a child that it ſtill learns its A, B, C. It is not fifty years ago that it knew neither letters, weights, meaſures, veſtments, corn, nor vines. It was even quite naked in its mother's lap, and only lived upon what ſhe nurſed it with. If we rightly judge of our period, and this poet alſo, of the youth of the age he lived in, this other world will be but juſt entering into light when ours ſhall make its exit. The univerſe will be paralytic; one member will be benumbed, another in vigour. I fear, indeed, that we ſhall have very much haſtened the decay and ruin of the new world by our infection, and that it will pay very dear for our opinions, and our arts. It was an infant world; yet we have not whipped, nor ſubjected it to our diſcipline by our valour and natural ſtrength; we have neither won the people by our juſtice and goodneſs, nor ſubdued them by our magnanimity. Moſt of their anſwers, and the negociations we have had with them, prove that they were not inferior to us in the clearneſs of natural underſtanding and apprehenſion. The aſtoniſhing magnificence of the cities of Cuſco and Mexico, and, among many things of the like kind, the garden of that king, wherein all trees, fruits, and herbs, according to the order and ſize they are of in a garden, were curiouſly figured in gold, as were in his cloſet all the animal bred in his dominions, and the ſea; and the beauty of their manufactures in jewels, feathers, cotton, and painting, ſhew that they likewiſe did not yield to us in induſtry. But as for devotion, obſervance of the laws, goodneſs, liberality, loyalty, and plain dealing, it was of ſervice to us

us that we had not so great a share of those virtues as they. For, by this advantage, they ruined, sold, and betrayed themselves.

The Spaniards subdued the Americans by craft and surprize, rather than by valour.

As to boldness and courage, steadiness, constancy, and a resolution to bear pains, hunger, and even death, I would not fear to set the examples I find among them in comparison with the most noted instances in antiquity that are to be met with in the memoirs of our side of the globe. For, as those who have subdued them, take away but the tricks and frauds which they made use of to gull them, and the just cause which those nations had of astonishment to see so sudden, and unexpected an arrival of men with beards, differing in language, religion, form, and countenance, from so remote a part of the world, which they never heard was at all inhabited, mounted, on great monsters to them unknown, against such as had not so much as ever seen a horse before, or any other beast trained up to carry a man or any other burden; to see those men cased with a shining, impenetrable shell, and armed with a cutting and glittering blade, brandishing it against those who, out of wonder at the brightness of a looking-glass or a knife, would truck great wealth in gold and pearls for them; and who had neither the skill nor matter wherewith to penetrate our steel, if they had ever so much time: add to this the thunder and lightning of our cannon and muskets, enough to have frightened Cæsar himself had he been surprised when so unexperienced, and now against a naked people, except where they had the apparel of quilted cotton, without other arms at the most, but bows, stones, staves, and bucklers of wood: a people over-reached, under the colour of friendship and good faith, by a curiosity of seeing things strange and unknown: take away, I say, this disparity from the conquerors, and you take away from them all the source of so many victories. When I consider that invincible ardour wherewith so many thousands of men, women, and children so often presented and threw themselves into unavoidable dangers, for defence of their gods and their liberties; that generous obstinacy to suffer all extremities and difficulties,

and even death, rather than submit to the government of those by whom they were so shamefully abused; and some chusing to die of hunger, and to starve themselves to death, after being made prisoners, rather than to accept of nourishment from the hands of their enemies so basely victorious: I foresee, that whoever should have attacked them, supposing an equality of arms, experience, and numbers, would have had a dangerous, if not a more desperate task to manage than in any other war we have seen. What pity it is that so noble a conquest did not fall to Alexander, or to those ancient Greeks and Romans; and that so great a revolution and change of so many empires and nations had not been effected by hands that might have used them courteously, and refined them by grubbing up what was savage amongst them, cherishing, and propagating the good seed which nature had produced there; and by not only mingling in the culture of their lands, and the ornament of their cities, the arts of this part of the world, but incorporating the virtues of the Greeks and Romans with those that were originals of their country! What a reparation, and what an amendment would it have been to the whole world, had our first examples and deportment in those parts allured the people to the admiration and imitation of virtue, and formed a fraternal society and understanding betwixt them and us! How easy would it have been to have made advantage of minds so undisciplined and so thirsty for knowledge, and such as, for the greatest part, had good natural parts to work upon.

The Americans would have been happy if they had fallen into the hands of conquerors more humane and polite.

On the contrary, we have taken advantage of their ignorance and inexperience, with the greater ease to incline them to treachery, luxury, avarice, and to all sorts of inhumanity and cruelty, by the example and pattern of our manners. Was paultry traffic ever promoted at so dear a rate? So many cities demolished, so many nations exterminated, so many millions of people put to the sword; and the richest, and most beautiful part of the world turned up-side-down for the traffic of pearls

With what barbarity they were treated by the Spaniards.

pearls and pepper! Mean victories! Never did ambition, never did national animosities provoke men to the commission of such horrid hostilities, against one another, attended with such miserable calamities.

The answer of some Americans to those execrable robbers.

Certain Spaniards coasting along the sea in quest of their mines, landed in a very fruitful, pleasant country, well inhabited, where they made their usual remonstrances to the people: "that they where peaceable men, who had made a long voyage, being sent on "the part of the king of Castille, the greatest prince in "the habitable world, to whom the pope, God's vicegerent upon earth, had granted the principality of all the "Indies: that if they would become tributaries to him "they should be used very courteously; at the same time "requiring provisions of them for their nourishment, and "gold for their use in medicine: they also recommended to them the belief of one God alone, and the truth "of our religion, which they advised them to embrace, "adding thereto some menaces." The answer was this, viz. "That as to their being peaceable, they did not "seem to be such, if they were so. As to their king, "because he asked, he must certainly be poor and necessitous; and the person who had allotted him this part "of the world must be a man fond of strife, by attempting to give away that which was not his own, and to "bring the title of the ancient possessors into dispute. "As to provisions, they would furnish them; that of "gold they had but little, and, indeed, made no account "of it, forasmuch as it was of no use to the service of "life, which all their care was to pass happily and pleasantly; that, however, they were welcome to take "what they could find, except that which was employed "in the service of their gods. As to the one God only, "they liked what they said of him, but they were not "inclined to change their religion, having so long lived "in it to their advantage; and that they were not accustomed "to take advice from any but their friends and acquaintance. As to menaces, it discovered a wrong judgment "to offer to threaten those whose nature and power was

"to them unknown: that, therefore, they had beſt quit "their coaſt without delay, for they were not uſed to take "the civilities and remonſtrances of armed men, and "foreigners too, in good part; otherwiſe they ſhould "do by them as they had done by thoſe others; ſhew-"ing them, at the ſame time, the heads of ſeveral men "executed, which were ſet up round the walls of their "city." Whether this was childiſh babble, from an infant ſtate, let the inſtance here given determine. But ſo it is, that the Spaniards, neither in this, nor many other places, where they did not find the merchandize they wanted, made no ſeizure nor attack, whatever other commodity was to be had there; witneſs my cannibals.

The Spaniards inhuman uſage of the king of Peru, after they had made him priſoner of war.

Of two of the moſt potent monarchs of that world, and, perhaps, of this; kings of ſo many kings, and the laſt the Spaniards drove from thence, the king of Peru being taken in battle, and put to a ranſom ſo exceſſive as is beyond all belief; which, however, was punctually paid; and having, by his converſation, given evident proof of a frank, generous, and conſtant ſpirit, and of a clear and undiſturbed imagination, the conquerors, after having exacted of him a million three hundred twenty-five thouſand five hundred weight of gold, beſides ſilver, and other things that amounted to no leſs (inſomuch that their horſes were now ſhod with ſolid gold) had a mind to ſee (how perfidious ſoever it might be deemed) what might be the reſt of this king's treaſure, and to make that alſo their property. To this end, a falſe charge was preferred againſt him, and falſe evidence ſuborned to prove that he had formed a deſign to raiſe an inſurrection in his provinces for recovering his liberty. Upon this, by the virtuous ſentence of the very men who had hatched this plot againſt him, he was condemned to be hanged in public, making him compound for the torture of being burnt alive, by ſubmitting to baptiſm, at the place of execution. A horrid and unheard-of barbarity, which he underwent, however, with an air truly brave and royal, without alteration either of his looks or language. And after this, to appeaſe the people, who were aſtoniſhed and

con-

confounded at so strange a scene, the Spaniards put on a shew of deep mourning for his death, and ordered him a sumptuous funeral.

Their execrable cruelty to the king of Mexico, who had also the misfortune to fall into their hands.

The other was the king of Mexico, who, after having been long besieged in his capital city, wherein, if ever a prince and people shewed it in this world, he discovered the utmost that patience and perseverance are capable of doing, had the misfortune of being delivered up alive into the hands of his enemies, upon articles of being treated as a king; (neither, during the time of his imprisonment, was any part of his behaviour unworthy of that title) but his enemies, after their conquest, not finding so much gold as they expected, when they had ransacked and rummaged every place, they proceeded to extort new discoveries, by inflicting the most hellish torments they could invent upon the prisoners whom they had taken; but, as they gained no advantage by it, their courage being greater than their tortures, they were at last so enraged that, contrary to their faith, and contrary to the law of nations, they condemned the king himself, and one of the chief courtiers, to be put upon the rack in the presence of one another. The nobleman, finding his spirits near spent with the pains and the heat of burning coals all round him, pitifully turned his dying eyes upon his master, as if it were to ask his pardon that he could hold out no longer. The king, darting a fierce and severe look at him, as reproaching his cowardice and meanness of spirit, said only these words to him with a harsh and steady voice, "and what dost thou think of "me, that I am in a bagnio? Am I more at ease than "thyself?" Upon this the courtier suddenly sunk under his pains, and died on the spot. The king, being half roasted, was carried from thence, not so much out of pity (for what compassion could ever reach souls so barbarous that, for giving a dubious information of some vessel of gold to be pillaged, they caused not a private man only, but a king, so great both in fortune and merit, to be broiled before their eyes) but it was because his constancy rendered their cruelty still the more shame-

ful. They afterwards hanged him for having had the courage to attempt to set himself free by force of arms from so long a state of captivity and subjection; and he made his exit in a manner becoming so magnanimous a prince.

The horrid butchery which the Spaniards committed in America on their prisoners of war.

At another time they burnt alive, in one and the same fire, four hundred and sixty men, viz. four hundred of the common people, and sixty of the chief lords of a province, whom they had taken prisoners of war. These narratives we have from themselves; for they do not only confess the facts, but boast of, and justify them: could it be to prove their justice, or their zeal for their religion? Certainly, these are methods too different from, and contrary to so holy an end. Had it been their view to extend our religion, they would have considered that it is not propagated by the possession of territories, but of hearts; and would have thought the blood spilt by the necessities of war too much, without increasing the effusion by a slaughter, like that of wild beasts, as universal as fire and sword could make it, having only chose to save as many as they intended to make wretched slaves of, to the work and service of their mines: so that many of the Spanish generals were put to death on the place of conquest, by order of the kings of Castille, justly offended with the horror of their behaviour; and they were almost of them hated and despised. God justly permitted that all this great plunder should be swallowed up by the sea in its transportation, or by the civil wars, in which they devoured one another; and the greatest part of them was buried on the spot, without gaining any fruit of their victory.

The treasure of the Americans not so considerable as was believed at first.

As for the revenue, and what was in the treasury of a provident and prudent king, the reason why it was so far short of the hopes those who came before had conceived, and of that abundance of riches which the Spaniards found at their first arrival in this new world (for, though a great deal was fetched from thence, we find it nothing in comparison of what might be expected) was because the use of money was intirely unknown there; and that, by consequence, their gold was

was all a dead ſtock, being of no other uſe but for ornament and oſtentation, as ſo much furniture reſerved from father to ſon by many powerful kings, who continually exhauſted their mines to form this heap of veſſels and ſtatues for the ornament of their palaces and temples; whereas our gold is all in circulation and traffic. We cut ours into a thouſand bits, caſt it into as many forms, and ſcatter and diſperſe it a thouſand ways. Let us only ſuppoſe that our kings had, in like manner amaſſed all the gold they could collect in ſeveral ages, and have let it lain idle by them.

The Mexicans made the world to conſiſt of five ages, and thought themſelves to be in the laſt when the Spaniards came to extirpate them.

The people of the kingdom of Mexico were ſomewhat more civilized, and greater artiſts than the other nations in that part of the world. They judged alſo, as we do, that the univerſe was near its period; and they looked upon the deſolation we brought amongſt them as a ſign of it. They believed the duration of the world to be divided into five ages, under five ſucceſſive ſuns, four of which had already finiſhed their career, and what now gave them light was the fifth. The firſt ſun periſhed, ſay they, with all other creatures, by an univerſal deluge. The ſecond by the fall of the firmament upon us, which ſuffocated every thing living; and in this age they place the giants, whoſe bones they ſhewed to the Spaniards; according to the proportion of which the ſtature of men amounted to twenty hands high. The third ſun they ſay was annihilated by fire, which burnt and conſumed every thing. The fourth by a commotion of air and wind, which even threw down ſeveral mountains; at which time men did not die, but were transformed into baboons. What impreſſions will not the lazineſs of human credulity admit! After the extinction of this fourth ſun, the world, ſay they, lay twenty-five years in continual darkneſs; in the fifteenth year of which were created a man and a woman, who renewed the human race. Upon a certain day, ten years after this, the ſun appeared newly created, and from this day begins their computation of years. The third day after it was created,

the

the ancient Gods died, and new ones have been born every day ſince. After what manner they think this laſt ſun will periſh my author has not learnt. But their calculation of this fourth change agrees with the great conjunction of the planets, which, eight hundred and odd years ago, as the aſtrologers compute, produced many great alterations and innovations in the world.

The magnificent works in Peru, ſuperior to thoſe of Greece, Rome, and Egypt.

As to pomp and magnificence, neither Greece, Rome, nor Egypt, can, either for utility, difficulty, or grandeur, compare any of their works with the road made in Peru, by the kings of that country, from the city of Quito to that of Cuſco (three hundred leagues in length) it being ſtrait, even, twenty-five paces in breadth, paved, and incloſed on both ſides with noble high walls; along the innermoſt of which two brooks are continually running, with beautiful trees, named Moly, on their banks. In this work, where they met with rocks and mountains, they cut through and levelled them, and filled up the chaſms with ſtone and lime. At the end of every day's journey there are fine palaces, furniſhed with proviſions, cloaths, and arms, as well for travellers as for ſoldiers that paſs that way. In my eſtimation of this work, I have computed the difficulty, which is particularly conſiderable in that place. They did not build with any ſtones leſs than ſuch as were ten foot ſquare, which they had no other way to tranſport but by dragging them along by the ſtrength of their arms; nor did they know ſo much as the art of ſcaffolding, nor had they any other way to go to work but to raiſe the ground with the building, taking away the earth when the whole was erected.

The laſt king of Peru carried in a chair of gold to the midſt of the field of battle.

We return now to our coaches. Inſtead of theſe, or any other vehicles, they were carried upon men's ſhoulders. The laſt king of Peru, on the day that he was taken, was thus carried upon poles or ſtaves of gold, and ſitting in a chair of gold, to the middle of the field of battle. As faſt as theſe chairmen were killed in the attempt to diſmount him (for they were determined

termined to take him alive) others ſtrove to ſupply their room; ſo that they could never get him down, what ſlaughter ſoever they made of thoſe chairmen, till he was ſeized and pulled to the ground by a man on horſeback.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Inconvenience of Greatneſs.

He who knows what greatneſs is, may avoid it without much trouble.

SINCE we cannot attain to it, let us take our revenge by railing at it: yet to find fault with a thing is not abſolutely railing at it, there being ſome faults in all things how beautiful and deſirable ſoever. In general, greatneſs has this evident advantage, that it lets itſelf down at pleaſure, and has almoſt the choice of either condition. For a man does not fall from all heights, but may come down from the greateſt part of them without falling. Indeed, it ſeems to me that we value it at too high a rate, and that we alſo overvalue the reſolution of thoſe whom we have either ſeen or heard to have contemned it, or let themſelves down from it of their own accord. Its eſſence is not ſo manifeſtly commodious but it may be refuſed without a miracle. I find it a very hard thing to bear misfortunes; but to be content with a moderate fortune, and to avoid greatneſs, is a thing, in my opinion, of very little trouble. This is a virtue, methinks, to which I, who am no conjurer, could arrive at without much ſtruggle. What then ought they to do who would even put into the ballance the glory attending this refuſal, wherein there may be more ambition lurking than even in the deſire and enjoyment of greatneſs? Foraſmuch as ambition never conducts itſelf better, according to its own manner, than by a path which is unfrequented, and out of the road.

I ſpur

Montaigne was never ambitious of very high preferment.

I ſpur up my courage to patience; but ſlacken its rein towards deſire. I have as much to wiſh for as another, and allow my wiſhes as much liberty and indiſcretion; but yet it never was my lot to wiſh for either empire or royalty, nor for the eminency of thoſe high and commanding fortunes. I do not aim that way. I love myſelf too well. When I think of growing greater, it is but very moderately, and by a conſtrained and timorous increaſe, ſuch as is proper for me, in reſolution, in prudence, in health, beauty, and even in wealth. But that reputation, and that ſo mighty authority oppreſs my imagination. And, quite contrary to ſome others, I would, perhaps, rather chuſe to be the ſecond or third man in Perigord than the firſt in Paris; at leaſt, without lying, be the third than the firſt officer in Paris. I would neither diſpute with a porter at the gate, a wretch whom I knew not, nor make crowds open to adore me as I paſs. I have been trained up to a middle rank in life, as well by my inclination as my fortune; and have made it appear, by the whole courſe of my behaviour and undertakings, that I have rather avoided than otherwiſe to climb above the degree of fortune to which I was born. Every natural conſtitution is equally juſt and eaſy. I have, therefore, ſo mean a ſpirit that I meaſure not good fortune by its height, by by its eaſy attainment.

His preference of a quiet life to that of Regulus, who was ſo admirable for his fortitude in the greateſt perils.

But if I have not a heart great enough, I am made amends by an open heart, which enjoins me boldly to proclaim its weakneſs. Were I deſired to compare the life of L. Thorius Balbus, a fine gentleman, learned, healthy; a man of an excellent underſtanding, and abounding in all manner of conveniencies and pleaſures, leading a tranquil life, and all after his own way, with a ſoul duly prepared to meet death, and fortified againſt ſuperſtition, pain, and other incumbrances of human neceſſity, dying at laſt in battle with his ſword drawn for the defence of his country; ſhould I compare his with the life of M. Regulus, ſo grand and ſublime as every one knows it was, together with

with his admirable exit; the one without name, without dignity, the other exemplary and wonderfully glorious, I would doubtleſs ſay as Cicero did *, could I ſpeak as well as he. But, were I to ſet them together in my own phraſe, I would ſay alſo that the life of the former is as much within my capacity and within my deſire, which I make conformable to my capacity, as the latter is beyond it; that I could not approach the laſt without veneration, but to the firſt I would readily attain by habit.

He loved not to command nor be commanded.

Return we now to our temporal greatneſs, from which we have digreſſed. I neither like to command nor be commanded. Otanez, one of the ſeven who had a right to lay claim to the kingdom of Perſia, did, as I would readily have done myſelf, i. e. † he gave up to his competitors his right of attaining to it, either by election or by lot, provided that he and his might live in the empire free of all ſubjection and obedience, that to the ancient laws excepted; and that they might enjoy all liberty that was not to the prejudice thereof, he having as great an averſion to command as to obey.

Kings the more excuſable becauſe their office is one of the moſt difficult.

The moſt painful and difficult employment in the world is, in my opinion, worthily to diſcharge the office of a king. I excuſe more of their failings than men commonly do, in conſideration of the vaſt weight of their function, which really aſtoniſhes me. It is difficult for ſuch boundleſs power to preſerve any decorum. Yet ſo it is that, even to thoſe who are not of the moſt happy diſpoſition, it is a ſingular incitement to virtue to be ſtationed in ſuch a place, where whatever good you do is recorded, and placed to account, where the leaſt bene-

* Cicero, from whom Montaigne has taken this parallel, plainly gives the preference to Regulus. Thorius, he ſays, wallowed in pleaſures of every kind, and was a contemner of the ſacrifices and temples of his country: that he was a handſome man, perfectly healthy, and ſo valiant that he died in battle for the cauſe of the republic; inſomuch, adds Cicero, that I dare not name the man who was preferable to him; but virtue ſhall ſpeak for me, who will not heſitate a moment to give M. Regulus the preference, and to proclaim him the more happy man. De Finib. Bon et Mal. lib. ii. cap. 20.

† Herodot. lib. iii. p. 222, 223.

faction

faction extends to so many men, and where your talent, like that of preachers, chiefly addresses itself to the people, who are not very nice judges, easily deceived and easily satisfied. There are few things wherein we can give a sincere judgment, because there are few wherein we have not in some sort a particular interest. Superiority and inferiority, command, and subjection, are naturally liable to envy and cavil, and must necessarily be continually incroaching upon one another. I believe neither the one nor the other touching its respective rights; let reason, therefore, which is the inflexible and dispassionate, when we can find it, determine the case. It is scarce a month ago that I turned over two Scotch authors who contended with each other upon this point. He who takes the part of the people renders the condition of a king worse than that of a carter; and the writer for the monarch lifts him up some degrees above almighty God in sovereignty and power.

Great men are excluded from the exercises of honour and valour.

Now the inconveniency of greatness, which I have here taken upon me to consider upon some occasion that lately put it into my head, is this: there is not, perhaps, any thing more pleasant in men's dealings with one another than their competitions and contentions, through an emulation of honour and valour, either in the exercises of the body or of the mind, wherein sovereign greatness has no real share. Indeed I have often thought, that, out of pure respect, men have used princes injuriously and disdainfully in that particular. For the very thing I was vehemently disgusted at, when a lad, was to see, that those who performed their exercises with me forbore to do their best, as if they thought me unworthy of such effort; and this is what we see happen to them daily, every one thinking himself unworthy to contend with them. If we discover that they have the least passion to get the better, there is not a man that will not make it his business to give them the victory, and that will not chuse to betray his own honour rather than offend theirs. They employ no more force in it than is necessary to contribute to their honour. What share then have they in an engagement wherein every one is of their side?

side? Methinks I see those paladins of the ancient times presenting themselves to the justs and tournaments, with their bodies and armour inchanted. Brisson, running against Alexander, purposely committed a fault * in his career, for which Alexander chid him, but he ought to have whipped him. Upon this account Carneades said, "† That the sons of princes learned nothing right but "how to ride the managed horse, by reason that in all "other exercises every one bends and yields to them; "but a horse, being neither a flatterer nor a courtier, "makes no more scruple to fling the son of a king than "the brat of a porter." Homer was forced to consent that Venus, so perfect, soft, and delicate a beauty, should be wounded at the battle of Troy, for the sake of ascribing courage and boldness to her, qualities never known in those who are exempt from danger. The gods are made to be angry, to fear, to run away, to be jealous, to grieve, and to be transported with passion, to honour them with the virtues that amongst us are composed of those imperfections. He that does not participate in the hazard and difficulty, cannot pretend to an interest in the honour and pleasure that attend hazardous actions. It is pity, you should have such a power that all things give way to you. Your fortune throws society and good fellowship too far from you, and plants you in too great a solitude. That easiness, that mean facility of making all things stoop to you, is an enemy to all manner of pleasure. It is sliding, not going; it is sleeping, not living. Conceive a man accompanied with omnipotence, you plunge him in an abyss, and put him under a necessity of begging molestation and opposition from you as an alms. His being and his welfare are in a state of indigence. The good qualities of kings are dead and lost, for these are only to be perceived by comparison, and we put them

* Plutarch, in his treatise, How a Flatterer may be distinguished from a Friend, where this man, who suffered Alexander to conquer him, is called Crisson instead of Brisson as it is spelt in all the editions of Montaigne that I have met with. Indeed, in Plutarch's tract, entitled, Of the Satisfaction or Tranquility of the Mind, it is spelt Βρίσσων, in the Paris edit. fol. anno 1624. But it is an error of the press, because in the Latin version, which accompanies it, Xylander has put Crisson.

† Plutarch, ibid. chap. 15.

out

out of the way of it. Their ears are so tingled with a continual uniform approbation, that they have scarce any knowledge of true praise. Have they to do with the greatest fool of all their subjects? They have no way to take advantage of him: by his saying, "it is because he "is my king," he thinks he has said enough to imply that he therefore suffered himself to be overcome. This quality stifles and confuses the other true and essential qualities, which are sunk deep in the kingship, and leaves them nothing to set themselves off but actions that are actually contiguous and subservient to royalty, viz. the functions of their office. It is so much to be a king, that he is only so by that very denomination. This strange lustre that surrounds him, conceals him, and robs us of the view of him. Our sight is thereby repelled and dissipated, being engrossed and dazzled by this glaring splendor. The senate awarded the prize of eloquence to Tiberius, but he refused it, as thinking that, though the award had been ever so just, he could not have a true relish of it from a judgment so restrained.

How the faults of kings are hid from their eyes.

As we yield them all the advantages of honour, so do we sooth and give a sanction to their very defects and vices, not only by approbation, but even by imitation. Every one of Alexander's attendants carried their heads on one side as he did. And the flatterers of * Dionysius ran foul of one another in his presence, stumbled at, and kicked up every thing in their way, to denote that they were as purblind as he. Even ruptures have sometimes been a recommendation to favour. I have actually seen deafness affected; and, where the sovereign hated his wife, Plutarch † observed that the courtiers actually divorced theirs, whom they loved. And, what is yet more, uncleanness, and all manner of dissolution, disloyalty, blasphemy, cruelty, heresy, superstition, irreligion, effeminacy, and

* Plutarch, Of the Difference between the Flatterer and the Friend.

† Plutarch only says, that he knew a man who, because his friend divorced his wife, turned away his wife also, whom, nevertheless, he went to visit, and sent for sometimes privately to his house, which was discovered by the very wife of his friend. Plutarch, Of the Difference betwixt the Flatterer and the Friend, chap. 8. of Amyot's translation.

worse

worſe crimes, if worſe there can be, have at times been the reigning faſhion; and by an example yet more pernicious than that of the flatterers of Mithridates, who, * becauſe their ſovereign pretended to the honour of being a good phyſician, came to him to have inciſions and cauſtics applied to their bodies; for thoſe others ſuffered their ſouls, a more noble and delicate part, to be cauteriſed. But, to conclude the ſubject I began with, Adrian, the emperor, diſputing with the philoſopher Favorinus about the meaning of a word, Favorinus ſoon yielded him the point; for which his friends blaming him, "You talk ſimply," ſaid he, "would you make "me believe that he who commands thirty legions, is "not a man of more learning than I am?" † Auguſtus wrote verſes againſt Aſinius Pollio; "And I," ſaid Pollio, "ſay nothing, for it is not prudent to take up the "pen againſt him who has power to proſcribe." And theſe were both in the right. For Dionyſius, becauſe he could ‡ not equal Philoxenus in poetry, and Plato ‖ in reaſoning, condemned the one to the quarries, and ſent the other to the iſle of Ægina to be ſold for a ſlave.

* Plutarch, ibid. chap. 13. † Ælii Spartiani Adrianus Cæſar, p. 7 &. 8, Hiſt. Aug. ‡ Or rather becauſe he was not able to bear the ſlight opinion which Philoxenus ſhewed of his poetry. Diodorus of Sicily, lib. xi. cap. 2. ſays, that one day, at ſupper-time, as they were reading ſome worthleſs poems of this tyrant, that excellent poet Philoxenus, being charged to give his opinion of them, was too free in his anſwer to pleaſe Dionyſius, for which the tyrant was ſo much incenſed againſt him that he ordered him to be ſent immediately to the quarries. ‖ Montaigne is miſtaken here with regard to Plato, who was ſold a ſlave in the iſland of Ægina, by order of Dionyſius the tyrant, becauſe he had ſpoken too freely to him; as Diodorus of Sicily ſays poſitively, lib. xv. cap. 2. and more particularly alſo Diog. Laert. in the life of Plato, lib. iii. ſect. 18, 19. In theſe two laſt notes the fault I have found with Montaigne I might, indeed, have as well placed to the account of Plutarch, who ſays the very ſame thing as Montaigne in his treatiſe Of Contentment, or Peace of the Mind, chap. 12. yet I cannot but think that Plutarch has here been guilty of ſome inaccuracy of expreſſion.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Art of Diſcourſing.

The end of puniſhments; and how the vices of ſome men may ſerve for inſtruction to others.

IT is the cuſtom of our juſtice to condemn ſome for a warning to others. To condemn them for no other reaſon but becauſe they have done amiſs, were downright ſtupidity, as Plato ſays, for what is done cannot be undone; but it is to the end they may offend no more, and that others may not commit the like offence. We do not reform the man whom we hang, but we reform others by him. I do the ſame. My errors are ſometimes natural, and neither to be corrected nor remedied; but the benefit which virtuous men do the public, by making themſelves imitated, I may do, perhaps, in making my conduct avoided.

Nonne vides Albi ut malè vivat filius, utque
Barrus inops? magnum documentum, ne patriam rem
Perdere quis velit *.

Don't you behold the wealthy Albus' ſon,
How wretchedly he lives, how he's undone!
There's Barrus too, how ſhabby is he grown!
Barrus, the greateſt rake of all the town:
A good inſtruction for young heirs, that they
Should not their patrimony fool away.

Whilſt I proclaim and condemn my own imperfections, another perſon will be taught to fear them. The parts that I moſt eſteem in myſelf derive more honour from accuſing, than from recommending myſelf; which is the reaſon I the oftner relapſe and ſtick to them. But, when all is ſaid and done, a man never ſpeaks of himſelf without loſs. Self-condemnation is always believed, but ſelf-praiſe never. There may perhaps, be ſome of my own conſtitution, who inſtruct me better by contrariety than by ſimi-

* Hor. lib. i. ſat. 4. ver. 109, &c.

litude,

litude, and more by avoiding than imitating me. This was that ſort of diſcipline which the elder Cato had in his thoughts, when he ſaid, that "wiſe men have more to "learn of fools, than fools of wiſe men:" and that ancient player upon the harp, who, Pauſanias ſaid, uſed to compel his ſcholars to go and hear one that lodged oppoſite to him, who played very ill, that they might thereby learn to hate his diſcords and falſe meaſures. The horror of cruelty more inclines me to mercy than any example of clemency could poſſibly do. A good riding-maſter does not ſo much mend my ſeat in the ſaddle as an attorney, or a Venetian gondolier on horſeback; and a ſorry ſpeaker reforms my language better than a good one. The ſilly look of another perſon always advertiſes and adviſes me; and that which is pungent awakes and rouſes much better than what is pleaſing. It is fit time for us to reform the backward way by diſagreement rather than by agreement, by diſcord rather than accord. As I learn little by good examples, I make uſe of bad, which are very common. I have endeavoured to render myſelf as agreeable as I ſee others offenſive, as conſtant as I ſee others fickle, as affable as I ſee others rough, as good as I ſee others wicked; but I propoſed to myſelf meaſures invincible.

The uſefulneſs of converſation.

The moſt fruitful and natural exerciſe of the mind, in my opinion, is converſation, the uſe of which I find to be more agreeable than any other exerciſe in life. For this reaſon, were I now forced to make my choice at this inſtant, I think I would agree rather to loſe my ſight than my hearing, or my ſpeech. The Athenians and the Romans alſo held this exerciſe in great honour in their academies: and the Italians to this day retain ſome footſteps of it to their great advantage.

It is an exerciſe more inſtructive than the ſtudy of books.

The ſtudy of books is a languid, feeble motion, that does not warm, whereas converſation at once inſtructs and exerciſes. If I diſcourſe with a man of ſtrong ſenſe, and a ſhrewd diſputant, he ſmites me hip and thigh,

goads me on the right and left, and his imaginations give vigour to mine. Envy, glory, contention, ſtimulate, and raiſe me above myſelf; whereas a uniſon of judgment is a quality that is a perfect nuiſance in converſation. But as the mind gathers ſtrength, by the communication of vigorous and regular underſtandings, it is not to be expreſſed how much it loſes and degenerates by the continual correſpondence and company which we keep with ſuch whoſe imagination are vulgar and diſtempered. There is no contagion which ſpreads like that. I have ſufficient reaſon to know the evil of it by dear experience. I love to diſcourſe and diſpute; but it is with few men only, and for my own ſake; for to be put up as a ſpectacle before a great aſſembly, and to make a parade and boaſting of a man's flow of wit and words, is, I think, very unbecoming a perſon of honour.

Not to beable to bear with nonſenſe is a very troubleſome diſtemper of the mind.

Nonſenſe is a contemptible quality, but not to be able to bear with it, and to fret and vex at it as I do, is another ſort of diſeaſe, altogether as troubleſome as nonſenſe: and this is the very thing of which I will now accuſe myſelf. I enter into a conference and diſpute with great freedom and eaſe, foraſmuch as opinion meets in me with a ſoil very unfit for penetration, and too hard for it to take any deep root. No propoſitions aſtoniſh me, no belief offends me, how contrary ſoever it be to my own. There is no fancy ſo frivolous and extravagant that does not ſeem to me to be very ſuitable to the product of the human underſtanding. As for ſuch of us, who deprive our judgment of the right of making decrees, we look upon the various opinions with indifference; and if we do not incline our judgments to them, yet we readily lend an ear to them. Where one ſcale of the ballance is quite empty, I let the other waver under the dreams of an old woman: and I think myſelf excuſable if I chuſe the odd number, Thurſday rather than Friday; if I had rather be the twelfth or fourteenth than the thirteenth at table; if I had rather, on a journey, ſee a hare run by me than croſs

my

my road, and that my stocking be put on my left foot first. All such whimsies as are current about us, deserve least to be hearkened unto. As to me they are all mere vanity, and that is what they really import. Moreover, vulgar and casual opinions, considered in their weight, are, indeed, something more than nothing in nature. And he who will not suffer himself to proceed so far, falls, perhaps, into the vice of obstinacy, for the sake of avoiding that of superstition. The contradictions of judgments, therefore, neither offend nor alter me; they only awake and exercise me. We shun correction, whereas we ought to put ourselves in the way of it, especially when it comes by way of conference, and not of authority. As to every opposition, we do not consider whether it be just, but how we shall, right or wrong, disengage ourselves from it. Instead of extending our arms we thrust out our claws. I could suffer myself to be roughly handled by my friends telling me that I am a fool and a dreamer. I love to hear gentlemen speak, as they think, with courage. We must fortify and harden our organ of hearing against this ceremonious sound of words. I love a strong and manly familiarity and conversation; a friendship that is pleased with the sharpness and vigour of its communication, as love is with biting and scratching. It is not vigorous nor generous enough if it be not quarrelsome, if it be civilized and artificial, if it treads gingerly, and is afraid of a shock. *Neque enim disputari sine reprehensione potest* *. "Nor can there be any disputation without contradiction." When I am contradicted, it rouses my attention but not my indignation. I incline towards him who contradicts and instructs me. The cause of truth ought to be the common cause of both the one and the other. What answer will he make? The passion of anger has already given a blow to his judgment. Anguish has taken possession of it before reason. It would be of service that our disputes were decided by wagers; that there might be a material mark put upon what we lost, to the end

* Cic de Finibus Bon. & Mal. lib. i.

that we might keep an account of it, and that my man might tell me, "my ignorance and obſtinacy coſt me laſt "year a hundred crowns at ſeveral times." I cheriſh and careſs truth in what hand ſoever I find it; I chearfully ſurrender to it; I open my conquered arms to it as far off as I can ſee it approaching, and I take a pleaſure in being reproved, provided it be not with an air too deriding and imperious. And I accommodate myſelf to my accuſers more frequently for civility ſake than for the ſake of amendment, chuſing to gratify and encourage a freedom to admoniſh me, by my ready ſubmiſſion to it. Nevertheleſs it is hard to bring the men of my time to it. They have not the courage to correct, becauſe they cannot bear to be corrected themſelves. And they always ſpeak with diſſimulation in one another's preſence. I take ſo great a pleaſure in being judged and known, that it is in a manner indifferent to me in which of the two forms I am ſo. My imagination ſo often contradicts and condemns itſelf, that it is all one to me if another do it, eſpecially conſidering that I grant no more authority than what I think fit to his reproof. But I am angry with the man who is ſo ſurly, which I know ſome are, as to be ſorry for his admonition if it be not credited, and takes it for an affront if it be not immediately followed. As Socrates always received the contradictions to his arguments with a ſmile, it may be ſaid that his ſtrength of reaſon was the cauſe, and that the advantage being certain of falling on his ſide, he accepted them as matter of new victory. Nevertheleſs we ſee, on the contrary, that there is nothing in the caſe that renders our ſentiment ſo delicate as an inclination to pre-eminence, and a diſdain of the adverſary; and that, therefore, the weaker diſputant has reaſon to take in good part, thoſe contradictions that correct and ſet him right. In earneſt, I rather chuſe to keep company with thoſe who gall me than thoſe who fear me. It is an inſipid and a hurtful pleaſure to have to do with people who admire and make way for us. Antiſthenes commanded his children "never "to take it kindly, or as a favour, from any man who

"com-

commended them *. I find I am much prouder of a victory which I gain over myſelf, when in the very heat of the contention, I ſurrender to the ſtrength of my adverſary's argument, than I feel pleaſure in a victory which I obtain over him by means of his weakneſs. In ſhort, I receive and admit of all manner of attacks that are direct, how weak ſoever; but I am quite out of patience with thoſe that are not made in form. I little care what the ſubject is; the opinions are all one to me, and the victory is to me a thing almoſt indifferent. I can argue a whole day together peaceably, if the debate be carried on with order. I do not require ſtrength and ſubtility ſo much as method; I mean the order which is every day obſerved in the wranglings of ſhepherds and ſhop-boys, but never among us. If they ſtart from the ſubject it is uncivil in them; and yet it is no more than what we do ourſelves: but their tumult and impatience does not carry them from their point. They purſue the thread of their argument. If they prevent, and do not ſtay for one another, they at leaſt underſtand one another. Any one anſwers too well for me, if he anſwer what I ſay. But when the diſpute is confuſed and irregular, I quit the ſubſtance, and adhere to the form with anger and indiſcretion, and fall into a teſty, malicious, and imperious way of diſputing, of which I am afterwards aſhamed. It is impoſſible to deal ſincerely with a fool. My judgment is not only depraved under the hand of ſo impetuous a maſter, but my conſcience alſo.

Diſputes that are ill conducted ought to be prohibited; the ill conſequences of them.

Out diſputes ought to be prohibited and puniſhed as well as other verbal crimes. ‡ What vice do they not create and accumulate, being always governed and commanded by paſſion? We firſt quarrel

* Plutarch, Of falſe Shame, chap. 12. Ὁ Ἀντισθένης Ἡρακλῆς παρῄνει τοῖς παισὶ διακελευόμενος μηδενὶ χάριν ἔχειν ἐπαινοῦντι αὐτούς. Montaigne has confounded this Antiſthenius, or Antiſtheneus, as the Latin tranſlation of Plutarch calls him, with the chief of the Cynic ſect, who never had the ſurname of Hercules, which Plutarch gives to Antiſthenius, and is conſtantly called Antiſthenes.

‡ The deſcription which Montaigne gives, from this place to the mark ¶, in the next page, of the faults that commonly attend our diſputes, is

quarrel with the arguments, and then with the men. We learn to diſpute purely for the ſake of contradicting; and, whilſt every one contradicts, and is contradicted, it falls out that all that is got by the diſpute is the loſs and annihilation of the truth. Plato, therefore, in his Republic, prohibits this exerciſe to fools and ill-bred people. To what end do you go about to inquire into a ſubject of one who knows not any thing that is worth knowing? It is doing no injury to the ſubject when a man leaves it in order to ſee which way to treat it. I do not mean a way that is artful and ſcholaſtic, but one that is natural and obvious to a ſolid underſtanding. What will it be in the end? One goes to the eaſt, the other to the weſt. They loſe the main point, and ſcatter it in a crowd of incidents. After ſtorming for an hour, they know not what they are looking for. One is low, the other high, and the third ſideling. One is taken with a word and a ſimile: another is no longer ſenſible of the oppoſition made to him, he is ſo engaged in his purſuit, and thinks of following his own courſe, and not yours: another, finding himſelf too weak to hold the argument, fears all, refuſes all, and at the very beginning, mixes and confounds the ſubject, or, in the very height of the diſpute, ſtops ſhort and grows ſilent by a peeviſh ignorance, affecting a haughty contempt, or a ſilly modeſty of avoiding contention. This man, provided he ſtrikes, cares not how much he lays himſelf open. The other counts his very words, and weighs them for reaſons. Another is beholden only to his (Stentor-like) voice, and his lungs. Here is one that draws inferences againſt himſelf, and another that deafens you with prefaces, and impertinent digreſſions †. Another falls into downright railing, and picks a quarrel for nothing, in order to get

very juſt, and very agreeably expreſſed. Pere Bouhours was ſo pleaſed with it, that he has inſerted it almoſt verbatim in lib. iii. of his Art de Penſer, chap. 20. § 7. but without directly aſcribing the honour of it to Montaigne, whom he only points out by the vague character of the Celebrated Author; whereas he ought moſt certainly to have named Montaigne expreſly, eſpecially after having juſt criticiſed him in the ſame chapter with great ſeverity, to call it no worſe, when he not only quoted his words, but named him without any ſcruple.

clear

clear of the company and converſation of a wit that is too hard for him. This laſt looks not into the reaſon of things, but draws a line of circumvallation about you, with the logic of his clauſes, and the rules of his art.

The ſtrange abuſe that is made of ſcience.

Who now does not enter into a diſtruſt of the ſciences, and doubt whether he can reap any ſolid advantage from them for the neceſſities of life, conſidering the uſe we put them to. *Nihil ſanantibus literis* *, as Seneca calls it. Who has got underſtanding by logic? Where are all its fine promiſes? *Nec ad melius vivendum, nec ad commodius diſſerendum*; "it neither makes a man live better, nor "diſcourſe more pertinently." Is there more balderdaſh in the brawls of fiſh-women than in the public diſputes of the men of this profeſſion? I would rather that a ſon of mine ſhould learn the language of the taverns than the babble of the ſchools. Take a maſter of arts, and diſcourſe with him, does he not make us ſenſible of this artificial excellency? Does he not captivate the women, and ſuch ignoramuſes as we are, by the admiration of the ſtrength of his reaſons, and the beauty of his method? Does he not govern and perſuade us as he will? Why does a man, who has ſo great advantage in matter and management, mix railing, indiſcretion, and rage, in his diſputations? Strip him of his gown, his hood, and his Latin; let him not batter our ears with Ariſtotle, in his *puris naturalibus*, you will take him for one of us, or worſe. By that complication and confuſion of language with which they overpower us, they appear in the light of jugglers, whoſe feats of activity ſtrike and impoſe upon our ſenſes, but do not at all ſhock our belief; and, their ſlight of hand excepted, they do nothing but what is common and mean. They are not the leſs fools for their being more learned; I love and honour knowledge as much as they who poſſeſs it; and, if a right uſe be made of it, it is the moſt noble

* Seneca, ep. 59.

and

and powerful acquisition of mortals: but in those (of whom there is an infinite number) who establish their sufficiency and value upon that basis, who appeal from their understanding to their memory, *sub alienâ umbrâ latentes* †, and can do nothing but by book, I hate it, if I may venture to say it, something worse than stupidity itself. In my country, and in my time, learning has improved fortunes sufficiently, but the mind not at all. If it meets with dull souls it overcharges and suffocates them, leaving them a crude and undigested mass; but, as for such as are free of all clogs, it readily purifies and subtilizes them. It is a thing of a quality almost indifferent; a very useful accomplishment to a sublime soul, but to others pernicious and mischievous; or rather a thing of very precious use, that will not suffer itself to be purchased at a low rate. In some hands it is a sceptre, in others a rattle.

It is method and management, that gives a value to disputation.

But to proceed: what greater victory do you hope for, than to convince your enemy that he is not able to encounter you? When you get the better of your position, it is truth that wins; when you get the advantage of order and method, it is you that win. I am of opinion that, in Plato and Xenophon, Socrates disputes more for the sake of the disputants than of the dispute, and more to instruct Euthydemus and Protagoras in the knowledge of their impertinence than in the impertinence of their art. He grasps at the first subject, like one who has a more profitable aim than to explain it, namely to clear the understandings which he takes upon him to cultivate and exercise. It is our proper business to be stirring, and upon the hunt after truth; and, if we prosecute the chace ill and impertinently, we are inexcusable. To fail in seizing, it is another thing. For we are born to search after truth, though it is the province of a greater power to possess it. It is not, as Democritus said, concealed in the unfathom-

† Seneca, epist. 33. i. e. We are always translators, and never authors.

able

ble deeps, but rather elevated to an infinite height in the divine knowledge. The world is but a ſchool of inquiry. It is not who ſhall enter the field, but who ſhall perform the beſt courſes. He may as well play the fool who ſpeaks the truth, as he who utters a falſehood; for we are upon the manner, not the matter of ſpeaking. It is my humour to regard the form as much as the ſubſtance, and the advocate as much as the cauſe, according to the rule laid down by Alcibiades. And I amuſe myſelf every day in reading authors, without minding their learning; their method being what I look for, not their ſubject. Juſt ſo too I hunt after the converſation of ſome celebrated genius; not that he may teach me, but that I may know him; and that then, if he be worth it, I may imitate him. It is in every man's power to ſpeak truly, but the talent of a few only to ſpeak methodically, prudently, and fully. By conſequence, the falſity which proceeds from ignorance, does not offend me, but the folly of it. I have broke off ſeveral advantageous bargains by reaſon of the impertinent wrangling of thoſe with whom I treated. I am not moved once in a year at the faults of thoſe over whom I have any power; but for the ſtupidity and obſtinacy of their allegations, and their fooliſh and brutiſh excuſes, we are every day ready to ſeize one another by the collar. They neither underſtand what is ſaid, nor why, and anſwer accordingly, which is enough to make a man mad. I never feel any ſevere ſhock in my head but when it is knocked by another head; and am more ready to compound for the crimes of my domeſtics than their raſhneſs, impertinence and folly. Let them do leſs, provided they are capable of doing it right. You live in hopes of warming their affection to you; but from a blockhead, there is nothing worth to be had, or hoped for.

A great fault in a man not to be able to bear with the follies of others.

But what if I take things otherwiſe than they are? It is poſſible I may; and, therefore, I accuſe my own impatience; and hold, in the firſt place, that ſuch impatience is as vicious in him who is in the right as in him who is in the wrong. For it is always a tyrannical

nical ſourneſs not to be able to bear a form different from one's own. Beſides, there really is not a greater, more conſtant, and more unaccountable folly than to be moved and provoked at the follies of mankind; for it chiefly makes us quarrel with ourſelves, and the ancient philoſopher never wanted occaſion for his tears whilſt he conſidered himſelf. Miſo *, one of the ſeven ſages, who was of the temper of Timon and Democritus, being aſked, "What he laughed at, being alone?" Made anſwer, "For the very reaſon becauſe I laugh "alone." How many ſilly things, in my opinion, do I ſay and anſwer every day of my life; and then how many more according to the opinion of others? If I bite my own lips at it, what muſt others do? In ſhort, we muſt live among the living, and let the river run under the bridge without our care, or at leaſt without our being diſturbed. To ſpeak the truth, how comes it that we can meet a man with a hump-back, or any other deformity, without being angry at it; and cannot bear to meet with a perſon who is of a wrong head, without putting ourſelves into a paſſion? This criminal ſourneſs ſticks more to the judge than to the crime. Let us always have this ſaying of Plato in our mouths, "Do "not I think things wrong becauſe I am wrong myſelf? "Am not I myſelf in fault? May not my admonition "rebound upon myſelf?" A wiſe and divine check this, which laſhes the moſt univerſal and common error of mankind. Not only the reproaches that we caſt upon one another, but our reaſons alſo; our arguments and controverſies are generally liable to be retorted upon us, and we are hurt with our own weapons. Of this antiquity has left me very grave examples. It was ſaid ingeniouſly, and very pertinently by Eraſmus, in his Adages, *Stercus cuique ſuum bene olet.* We ſee nothing behind us. We expoſe ourſelves to laughter a hundred times a day, while we laugh at our neighbour, and deteſt in others the very faults that are more conſpicuous in ourſelves, and which we admire with wonderful impudence and inadver-

* Diog. Laert. in the life of Miſo, lib. i. § 108.

tency.

tency. It was but yeſterday that I ſaw a man of good ſenſe pleaſantly and juſtly ridiculing the folly of another, who batters the ears of all companies with the catalogue of his genealogies and alliances, above half of them falſe (for they whoſe titles are moſt dubious and uncertain, are the moſt apt to fall upon ſuch ridiculous topics), and, at the ſame time, had he looked at home, he would have found, that he was altogether as intemperate and impertinent in publiſhing and crying up the pedigree of his wife. O! the impertinent aſſurance with which the wife ſees herſelf armed by her own huſband! If he underſtood Latin we would ſay to him,

Ageſis hæc non inſanit ſatis ſuâ ſponte, inſtiga *.

If of herſelf ſhe be not mad enough,
Be ſure to urge her to the utmoſt proof.

I do not ſay that no man ſhould accuſe who is not clear himſelf; for then the one would ever accuſe, not even he that is clear from the ſame ſort of ſtain; but I mean, that while our judgment falls upon another whoſe name is then in queſtion, it does not exempt us from an internal and ſevere juriſdiction. It is an office of charity that the man who cannot reclaim himſelf from a vice, ſhould, nevertheleſs, endeavour to remove it in another, in whom, perhaps, it may not have taken ſo deep and malignant a root. Neither do I think it a pertinent anſwer to him, who admoniſhes me of my fault, to tell him that he is guilty of the ſame. What does this ſignify? The admonition is, notwithſtanding true and uſeful. If we had a good noſe our ordure would be the more offenſive to us, becauſe it is our own. And Socrates is of opinion, that whoever ſhould find himſelf, his ſon, and a ſtranger, guilty of any violence and wrong, ought to begin with himſelf, to preſent himſelf firſt to the ſentence of juſtice; and, in order to purge himſelf, to implore the aſſiſtance of the hangman. The ſon ſhould take place next, and then the ſtranger. If this precept ſeem a little too ſevere, he ought, at leaſt,

* Ter. Andria act iv. ſcene 2. ver. 9.

to preſent himſelf the firſt to the ſting of his own conſcience.

That which ſtrikes our ſenſes determines our judgments. The gravity, robe, and fortune of the ſpeaker gives weight to a thouſand ſilly things that fall from his lips.

The ſenſes which perceive things only by external accidents, are our proper and firſt judges; and it is no wonder if, in all the parts of our ſocial duty, there is ſo perpetual and univerſal a mixture of ceremonies and ſuperficial appearances; inſomuch that therein conſiſts the beſt and moſt effectual part of our civil government. It is ſtill man with whom we have to do, whoſe condition is wonderfully corporeal. As for thoſe who, of late years, have aimed to erect ſuch a contemplative and immaterial exerciſe of religion for us, let them not wonder if there be ſome who think it had ſlipped and vaniſhed through their fingers, had it not continued among us as a mark, title, and inſtrument of diviſion and partition, more than by itſelf. As in a conference, the gravity, the robe, and the fortune of the ſpeaker, often give a reputation to vain and ſilly arguments; it is not to be preſumed, but that a gentleman ſo attended, and that ſtrikes ſuch an awe, has ſome ſufficiency in him that is more than common; and that the man to whom the king has given ſo many commiſſions and offices, a man of ſo ſolemn and ſupercilious a countenance, muſt be a perſon of greater abilities than another who ſalutes him at a great diſtance, and who has no employment. Not only the words, but the grimaces of thoſe people, are conſidered, and put to the account, every one making it his buſineſs to give them ſome fine and ſolid conſtruction. If they condeſcend to common converſation, and you offer them any thing but approbation and reverence, they knock you down with the authority of their experience: they have heard, they have ſeen, they have done ſo and ſo; you are cruſhed with examples. I would chuſe to tell them that the fruit of a ſurgeon's experience is not the hiſtory of his practice, and his calling to mind that he has cured four people of the plague, and three of the gout, unleſs he knows how to extract ſomething from it on which to form

form his judgment, and make us ſenſible that he is thereby become the wiſer in the uſe of his art. As in a concert of muſic, we do not hear a lute, a harpſichord, and a flute alone, but one blended harmony of all the inſtruments together. If they are improved by travelling, or by their poſts, their underſtanding will make it appear. It is not enough to count the experiments: they muſt be weighed and ſorted, digeſted and diſtilled, in order to extract the arguments and inferences which they carry with them. There were never ſo many hiſtorians. It is always good and uſeful to attend to them, for they furniſh us every where with excellent and commendable inſtructions from the magazine of their memory, which, doubtleſs, is of great importance to the ſupport of life. But it is not this we ſeek for now: we examine whether theſe relaters and collectors of things are commendable themſelves. I hate every kind of tyranny, both in words and deeds. I heartily ſet myſelf againſt thoſe vain circumſtances which deceive our judgment through the ſenſes; and, whilſt I narrowly obſerve theſe extraordinary grandees, I find, that at beſt, they are but men as others are.

Rarus enim fermè ſenſus communis in illâ
Fortunâ *.

——————— for 'tis rare
If wealth uncommon, common ſenſe can ſhare.

Why great men appear ſometimes to be more fooliſh than they are in fact.

Perhaps, we think them leſs than they are, by reaſon they undertake more, and make a greater parade, and at the ſame time do not perform what they engaged in. There muſt be more vigour and ſtrength in the bearer than the burden. He who has not exerted his full ſtrength, leaves you to gueſs whether he has ſtill more, and whether he has been tried to the utmoſt of what he is able to perform. He who ſinks under his burden, diſcovers the meaſure of his ſtrength, and the

* Juv. ſat. viii. ver. 73.

weakneſs

weakneſs of his ſhoulders. This is the reaſon why we find ſo many more ſilly mortals among the learned than there are others. Some of them would have made good huſbandmen, good merchants, and good artificers: their ſtock of natural vigour was proportioned to thoſe callings. Knowledge is a thing of great weight: they faint under it. Their genius has neither vigour nor dexterity enough to diſplay and diſtribute this rich and powerful matter, nor to make uſe and advantage of it. It has no prevailing virtue but in a ſtrong nature; and ſuch natures are very rare. The weak ones, ſays Socrates, ſpoil the dignity of philoſophy by handling it. It appears uſeleſs and vicious when it is not well placed *. Thus it is that they ſpoil and make fools of themſelves.

Humani qualis ſimulator ſimius oris,
Quem puer, arridens, pretioſo ſtamine ſerum
Velavit, nudáſque nates ac terga reliquit,
Ludibrium menſis †.

Juſt like an ape that, ſprung from mimick race,
With various aſpects counterfeits man's face,
Which boys, for ſport, with ſilken veſt adorn,
But leave its buttocks bare, to raiſe their ſcorn.

Nor is it enough for thoſe who govern and command us, who have the world, as we ſay, in a ſtring, to be men of common underſtanding, and to be able to do what we can; for if they are not very much ſuperior to us they are far below us, ſince as they promiſe more they ought to perform more.

* Like precious liquor which is ſpoiled if poured into a veſſel that is not clean.

Sincerum eſt niſi vas, quodcumque infundis, acescit.
Tainted veſſels ſour their contents.

† Claudian in Eutrop. lib. i. ver. 303, &c.

Yet

Yet ſilence in them not only gives them an air of reſpect and gravity, but often alſo conduces to their profit and ſervice. Megabyſus going one day to ſee Apelles in his painting room, ſat ſtill a long time without ſpeaking a word; but at laſt, beginning to diſcourſe of his performances, he received this harſh reprimand from him: "Whilſt "thou waſt ſilent * thou ſeemedſt to be ſome perſon of "great account, becauſe of thy chains, and thy pompous "appearance; but now that we have heard thee ſpeak, "there is not the meaneſt boy in my work-ſhop that does "not deſpiſe thee." His magnificent habit, and his great ſtate, condemned his ignorance the more, while he talked of painting ſo impertinently. He ought to have ſaid nothing at all, and not betrayed his ſuperficial and conjectural knowledge. How many fools, in my time, have paſſed for men of prudence and capacity, by reaſon of their gravity and taciturnity!

Silence is of admirable uſe to the great.

Dignities and offices are of neceſſity conferred more by fortune than by merit, and kings are often blamed for it wrongfully. On the contrary, it is a wonder that they ſhould have ſo much fortune with ſo little ſkill.

The greateſt offices diſtributed by mere fortune.

Principis eſt virtus maxima, noſſe ſuos †.

No greater virtue can a prince enjoy
Than well to know the men he would employ.

For nature has not given them a ſight that can extend to ſo many people, to diſcern where lies the preference, and to penetrate into our breaſts, where our will and worth are beſt to be known. They muſt make choice of us by conjecture and trial; by our family, wealth, learning, and by the voice of the people; all very weak arguments. Whoever could find out a way to form a right judgment of this, and to chuſe men by reaſon, would, by ſo doing, eſtabliſh a perfect form of government.

* Plutarch, in his treatiſe How to diſtinguiſh the flatterer from the friend, chap. 14. † Martial. lib. viii. epig. 15. ver. ult.

Whether success be always a proof of sufficiency.

Nay more, he has brought this grand affair to a point. This is saying something, but not enough: for this opinion is justly admitted, that we are not to judge of counsels by events. The Carthaginians * punished their generals for giving wrong advice, though it was attended with happy success; and the people of Rome often refused triumph for great and very advantageous victories, because such success was not to be expected from the general's conduct. We commonly see in the transactions of the world, that fortune, to shew us her power in all things, and which takes pleasure in mortifying our presumption, not being able to make fools wise, she makes them happy in spite of virtue, and is forward to favour those operations which are most purely of her own plan. Hence it is that we daily see the simplest amongst us bring very great business, both public and private, to an issue: and as Sirannez †, the Persian, made answer to those who wondered how his affairs succeeded so ill, considering that his deliberations were so wise: "that he was sole master of his "purposes, but the success of his affairs was wholly in the "power of fortune ‡." These may return the same answer, but with a contrary bias. Most of the affairs of this world are performed by accidents.

Fata viam inveniunt ||.

The Fates are sure to find a way.

The event often justifies very foolish conduct. Our interposition is as it were but a thing of course, and more commonly a consideration of use and example than of reason. Being amazed at the greatness of a deed, I have formerly been acquainted, by those who have performed

* The Carthaginians are said to have hanged up their generals, though victorious, if the advice they acted by was wrong, Tit. Liv. lib. xxxvii. cap 48. † Or rather Seirammes Σειράμης, as we read it in Plutarch, in his prologue to the Remarkable sayings of the ancient kings, princes, and generals. ‡ Plutarch in the preface, above mentioned, to the Remarkable sayings. || Virgil. Æneid. lib. iii. ver. 395.

it

it, of their motives and their addreſs, and have found nothing therein but very ordinary advice; and the moſt common and cuſtomary are alſo, perhaps, the moſt ſure and convenient for practice, if not for ſhow. What if the plaineſt reaſons are the beſt planned? What if the loweſt, the baſeſt, and moſt beaten, are beſt adapted to affairs? In order to preſerve the authority of the counſels of kings, it is not neceſſary that prophane perſons ſhould participate in them, or ſee farther into them than the firſt out-line. My conſultation ſkims over the ſubject a little, and ſlightly conſiders it by the firſt appearances. The ſtreſs and main of the buſineſs I have been uſed to reſign to heaven.

Permitte divis cætera *.

Leave to the gods the reſt.

Chance has a very great ſhare in human actions.

Good fortune and ill fortune are, in my opinion, two ſovereign powers. It is a folly to think that human prudence can play the part of fortune; and vain is his attempt who preſumes to comprehend cauſes and conſequences, and to lead the progreſs of his deſign, as it were, by the hand: vain, eſpecially in military deliberations. There never was greater circumſpection and military prudence than has been ſometimes ſeen amongſt us. Could it be that men were afraid of periſhing by the way, that they reſerved themſelves for the cataſtrophe of the game? I even affirm, that our very wiſdom and conſulation for moſt part, follow the conduct of chance. My will and my reaſon are ſometimes moved by one impulſe, and ſometimes by another; and many of thoſe movements govern themſelves without me. My reaſon has uncertain, and caſual agitations.

* Horat. lib. i. ode 9. ver. 9.

Vertuntur species animorum, et pectora motus
Nunc alios, alios, dum nubila ventus agebat,
Concipiunt *.

Now one impression in their bosoms dwells;
Another, when the wind the clouds dispels.

If we but observe who are the men of the greatest sway in cities, and who do their own business best, we shall commonly find that they are men the least qualified. Women, children, and fools, have had the fortune to govern large dominions equally well with princes of the greatest abilities; and we find, says Thucydides, that the stupid governors out-number those of better understandings. We ascribe the effects of their good fortune to their prudence.

——Ut quisque fortunâ utitur,
Ita præcellet; atque exinde sapere illum omnes dicimus †.

According to their wealth all men we prize;
The rich are sure to be cried up for wise.

Wherefore I make no manner of scruple to declare, that events are slender proofs of our worth and capacity.

How we are imposed upon by rank.

Now I was upon this point, that there needs no more than to see a man raised to honour; though we knew him but three days before to be a man of little consequence, yet an idea of his greatness and sufficiency insensibly steals upon our opinions; and we persuade ourselves that as he increases in equipage and credit, so he increases in merit. We judge of him not according to his worth, but, as we do of counters, according to the prerogative of his rank. Let luck but turn, so that he fall again, and be mixed with the common crowd, every one inquires with astonishment into the cause of his having been raised so high. "Is it he?" say they. "Did he know no better when he was in place? Are princes so easily satisfied? "Really we were in fine hands." This very thing is what

* Virg. Geor. lib. i. ver. 420, &c. † Plautus in Pseud. act ii. sc. 3. ver. 83.

I have

I have often ſeen in my time. Nay the maſk of greatneſs, which is repreſented in comedies in ſome meaſure affects and deceives us. What I myſelf adore in kings, is the crowd of their adorers. All reverence and ſubmiſſion is due to them, except that of the underſtanding. My reaſon is not obliged to bow and bend, but my knees are. Melanthius, being aſked what he thought of the tragedy of Dionyſius, ſaid, "I have not ſeen it, it is ſo obſcured "with language *." And moſt of thoſe, who judge of the diſcourſes of great men, ſhould ſay I did not underſtand its drift, it was was ſo obſcured with gravity, grandeur, and majeſty. Antiſthenes one day perſuaded the Athenians to give order † that their aſſes might be as well employed in the tillage of their lands as their horſes. The anſwer made to him was, that "the aſs was an "animal not born for ſuch ſervice." "It is all one," replied he, "you need only command it to be done; "for the moſt ignorant and incapable men that you em-"ployed in your military orders, immediately become "worthy by your employing them." This is much like the cuſtom of many nations who, when they have choſen a king, canonize him; and do not think it enough to honour him, if they do not alſo adore him. The people of Mexico, after the ceremonies of his coronation are over, dare no more to look him in the face; but, as if they had made him a god, as well as a king, among the oaths they make him take, to maintain their religion, laws and liberties, to be valiant, juſt, and courteous; he ſwears alſo to make the ſun travel with its uſual light, to make the clouds diſtil at the proper ſeaſon, the rivers to run in their channels, and to make the earth bear all things neceſſary for his people.

Montaigne apt to ſuſpect a man's ability from the moment that he is preferred to a great poſt.

I diſſent from this common practice, and have the more diſtruſt of a man's capacity when I ſee it accompanied with a great fortune, and the public applauſe. We ought to conſider of how great advantage it is for a man to ſpeak when he

* Plutarch, in his treatiſe of Hearing, chap. 7. of Amyot's tranſlation.

† Diog. Laert. in the life of Antiſthenes, lib. vi. § 8. where this is told in a manner ſomewhat different, but in the main it amounts to the ſame thing.

pleaſes, to chuſe his ſubject, to break off the argument, or change it with a magiſterial authority, to defend himſelf againſt thoſe who argue with him by a nod of the head, a ſmile, or by ſilence, in the preſence of an aſſembly trembling with reverence and reſpect. A man of a monſtrous fortune, offering to give his judgment in a ſlight diſpute that was fooliſhly ſet on foot at his table, began in theſe very words, "he who ſays otherwiſe than ſo or "ſo, muſt be a liar, or an ignoramus." Purſue this philoſophical point ſword-in-hand.

Important advice for forming a right judgment of a man's capacity in converſation.

There is another obſervation I have made, that has been of great ſervice to me, which is, that in diſputes and conferences, all the phraſes which we think good, are not immediately to be accepted. Moſt men are rich in borrowed ſtock. One man may happen to ſay a good thing, to give an excellent anſwer, and advance a notable ſentence without knowing the force of it. That a man is not maſter of all that he borrows may be, perhaps, verified in myſelf. It is not always neceſſary to yield preſently to what is advanced, whatever truth or beauty it has. Either a man muſt heartily oppoſe it, or draw back, on pretence of not underſtanding it, to try in all parts how it is lodged in its author. It may happen that we may embaraſs ourſelves, and help to puſh the argument too far. I have ſometimes, in the neceſſity and heat of combat, made puſhes that have gone through and through, beyond my deſign and expectation. I only gave them in number, but they were received by weight: in like manner, when I contend with a briſk diſputant, I pleaſe myſelf with anticipating his concluſions; I eaſe him of the trouble of explaining himſelf, I endeavour to prevent his imagination whilſt it is at ſpringing up and imperfect; the order and pertinency of his underſtanding warns and threatens me at a good diſtance. With theſe I take a courſe quite contrary. I muſt underſtand and ſuppoſe nothing but by them. If they give judgment in general terms, "this is good, this is bad," and that they happen to be in the right, ſee if it be not fortune that hits it off for them. Let them circumſcribe, and limit

their

their judgment a little, why, or how is it so. These universal judgments, which I see so common, signify nothing. There are men who salute a whole people in a crowd together. Such as have a perfect knowledge of them take notice of, and salute them particularly, and by name; but it is a hazardous attempt. From hence I have frequently seen it fall out that shallow wits, affecting to appear ingenious in taking notice of the beautiful passages in a work which they are reading, fix their admiration with so ill a choice, that, instead of discovering the author's excellence to us, they only expose their own ignorance. It is a false exclamation to say, "this is fine," after having heard a whole page of Virgil. By this means the cunning ones save their credit. But to undertake to follow him by a passage here and there, and, with a positive and approved judgment, to attempt the observing where a good author surpasses himself, weighing the terms, phrases, inventions, and various excellencies, one after another, by all means forbear it. *Videndum est non modo, quid quisque loquatur, sed etiam, quid quisque sentiat, atque etiam, quâ de causâ quisque sentiat* ‡; "we are not only to observe what every "one says, but also what he thinks, and for what rea-"son he thinks so." I every day hear fools say things that are not silly. If they say a good thing, let us examine where they had it. We help them to make use of this fine expression, and of that fine argument, which is not their own, and which they only have in keeping: they bolt them out at a venture, and by guess; we make them turn out to their credit and esteem. You lend them a hand, but to what purpose? They do not think themselves obliged to you for it, and become still the greater blockheads. Never second them; let them go on in their own way; they will handle the subject like people afraid to burn their own fingers. They neither dare to change its situation nor light, nor to dive into it. Shake it ever so little, it slips through their fingers; and, be their cause ever so good and strong, they give it up to you. These are fine weapons, but have not good hafts.

‡ Cic. de Offic. lib. i. cap. 41.

How many times have I seen the proof of them. Now, if you go to explain things to them, and confirm them, they catch at it, and immediately steal the advantage of your interpretation, by saying, "that was what I was "going to say; that was just my thought, and if I did "not express it so clearly it was for want of language." This is mere gasconade. There had need be malice itself employed to correct this haughty stupidity. Hegesias's doctrine, that we are neither to hate nor accuse, but to instruct, is right elsewhere; but here it is injustice, and inhumanity, to relieve and set him right, who cares not for it, and is the worse for it. I love to let them sink deeper, and intangle themselves more and more in the mire, till at last, if it be possible, they may own their mistake. Folly and nonsense are not to be cured by admonition, of which we may properly say, as Cyrus did to the person who importuned him to make an harangue to his army just before a battle, viz. that men are not immediately rendered valiant and warlike, by a fine oration, no more than a man suddenly becomes a musian by hearing a fine song. These are apprenticeships that are to be served before-hand by a long and constant discipline. We owe this care, and this assiduity of correction and instruction, to our own people; but to go and preach to the first person that passes by, and to lord it over the ignorance and folly of the first we meet, is a custom that I heartily abhor. I rarely do it, even in private discourse, and sooner give up my cause than proceed to such retrograde and magisterial instructions. My temper is unfit either to speak or write for petty princes. But in things which are said in common, or amongst others, however false and absurd I think them, I never oppose them either by word or sign.

The most disagreeable thing in a fool is his admiration of every thing that he says.

As to the rest, nothing puts me so much out of conceit with a fool, as that he pleases himself more than any man of sense can reasonably please himself. It is a misfortune that prudence forbids us self-contentment and confidence, and sends us always away discontented and diffident in cases, where obstinacy and

and raſhneſs fill thoſe that are guilty of them with joy and aſſurance. The ignorant are they who look back at other men over the ſhoulder, always returning from the combat full of joy and triumph. And this haughtineſs of ſtyle, and gaiety of countenance, often gives them the advantage, in the opinion of by-ſtanders, who are commonly weak and incapable of rightly judging and diſcerning the real advantages. Obſtinacy and vehemence in opinion is the ſureſt proof of ſtupidity. Is there any thing ſo poſitive, reſolute, ſcornful, contemplative, ſerious, and grave as an aſs?

The uſefulneſs of ſmart and bold repartees in converſation.

May we not incorporate in diſcourſe and converſation the ſharp and pointed expreſſions which mirth and familiarity introduce among friends, pleaſantly and briſkly jeſting with, and bantering one another? This is an exerciſe for which my natural gaiety fits me well enough; and, though it be not as tedious and ſerious, as that other exerciſe which I mentioned juſt now, it is every whit as acute and ingenious, and, as Lycurgus thought, altogether as uſeful. For my part, I contribute more freedom than wit to it, and am more obliged to luck than to invention; but I am perfect in ſuffering, for I can bear a retaliation that is not only tart but indiſcreet alſo, without being at all moved. And whenever I am attacked, if I have not a briſk repartee ready, I do not trouble myſelf by purſuing the ſubject with a nauſeous impertinent conteſt, bordering upon obſtinacy. I let it drop; am glad to give up the point, and wait a better opportunity to take ſatisfaction. No merchant is always a gainer. Moſt men, when their ſtrength fails them, change their countenance and voice; and, by an unſeaſonable indignation, inſtead of revenging themſelves, accuſe at once their own folly and impatience. In theſe jovial moments we ſometimes pinch the private ſtrings of our imperfections, which, when compoſed, we cannot touch without offence; and we hint our defects to one another to our advantage.

There are other rough and indiſcreet contentions, after the French manner, which I mortally hate. I have a tender

der ſkin, which is ſenſible of the leaſt touch. I have, in my time, known two princes of our royal blood interred, who loſt their lives by ſuch a diſpute. It is unhandſome, at play, to fall out and fight.

When I have a mind to judge of any one, I aſk him how he likes himſelf, to what degree his ſpeech, or his work pleaſes him. I bar thoſe fine apologies: "I did "it only for my paſtime; I was not an hour about it; I "have not looked over it ſince."

Ablatum mediis opus eſt incudibus iſtis *.

This work, unfiniſhed, from the anvil came.

What method Montaigne took to form a judgment of a compoſition, when the author ſubmitted to it.

Well but, ſay I, ſet thoſe pieces aſide, and give one that repreſents you entire, ſuch a one as you would be meaſured by. And then what do you think is the beſt part of your performance? Is it this part, or that? the grace, or the ſubject, the invention, the judgment, or the learning? For I commonly find, that men are as wide of the mark in judging of their own works, as thoſe of others; not only by reaſon of the fondneſs they have for them, but for want of ability to know and diſtinguiſh them. The work, by its own merit and fortune, may ſecond the workman, and outſtrip him beyond his invention and knowledge. For my part, I do not judge of the value of other men's works more obſcurely than of my own; and the riſe and fall of my Eſſays, in my eſtimation, is very wavering and inconſtant. There are many books that are uſeful upon account of their ſubjects, from which the author derives no praiſe; and there are good books, as well as good works, which are a diſgrace to the operator. I may write of the manner of our feaſts, of the faſhion of our cloaths, and may treat of them with an ill grace. I may publiſh the edicts of my time, and the letters of princes that are handed about. I may make an abridgment of a

* Ovid. Triſt. lib. i. eleg. 6. ver. 29.

good

good book (though all abridgments of * good books are ſilly) which book may come to be loſt, and the like. Poſterity may receive ſingular benefit fr m ſuch compoſitions; but what honour ſhall I get, unleſs it be by mere good luck? A great part of the authors of note are in this condition. Several years ago, when I read Philip de Comines, who is, doubtleſs, a very good author, I took notice of this, as an uncommon maxim, "that a man "ſhould be cautious of doing his maſter ſo much ſervice "as to hinder him from meeting with a juſt requital." I ought to commend the invention, not him; for I not long ago met with it in Tacitus, who ſays, "that bene-"fits give us pleaſure, while they are not too great to be "requited; but, when they far exceed that, hatred is re-"turned inſtead of thanks †." And Seneca does not ſcruple to ſay, *Nam qui non putat eſſe turpe non reddere, non vult eſſe cui reddat* ‡; "he who thinks it a ſhame not "to make a requital, wiſhes the man, to whom he owes "it, was not in being." Quintus Cicero ſays, a little more feintly, *Qui ſe non putat ſatis facere, amicus eſſe nullo modo poteſt* ‖; "he who thinks it not in his power to make "you ſatisfaction, can by no means be your friend." The ſubject, according to what it is, may procure the writer a reputation for learning, and a good memory; but to inſpect him, and ſee what talents are moſt his own, and moſt worthy, and the vigour and beauty of his genius, it is neceſſary to know what is his own, and what is not ſo; and, in that which is not his own, to conſider how much we are obliged to him for the choice, diſpoſition, ornament, and language, which he has furniſhed. What if he has borrowed the matter, and ſpoiled the form, as often happens? We, who have little acquaintance with books, are in this difficulty, that, when we meet with ſome beautiful invention in any modern poet, any powerful argument in a preacher, we dare not, however, com-

* Somebody, however, has thought fit to publiſh a kind of abridgment of Montaigne's Eſſays (called L'Eſprit des Eſſais, &c.) but, as if the abridgment had been made only to juſtify Montaigne's obſervation, it died as it were in its birth, and is not like to be ever reprinted.

† Tacit. Annal. lib. iv. cap. 18. ‡ Seneca, ep. 81.

‖ Q. Cicer. de Petitione Conſulatus, cap. 9.

mend them for it, till we have firſt informed ourſelves by ſome learned man whether the ſame be their own, or borrowed. Till then I am always on my guard.

A digreſſion concerning the genius, and character of Tacitus.

I have very lately read the hiſtory of Tacitus, from the beginning to the end (which is the more remarkable in me, as it is twenty years ago ſince I ſtuck to any one book an hour together), and I did it at the perſuaſion of a gentleman whom France holds in very great eſteem, not only for his own worth, but for a conſtant appearance of capacity and virtue, which is diſcovered in many of his brothers. I do not know any author that, in a public narrative, has interwoven ſuch remarks on manners, and particular inclinations; and I am of a quite contrary opinion to him, which is that being, eſpecially, to write the lives of the emperors of his time, ſo various and extraordinary in every ſhape; and, to relate ſo many notable actions, as their cruelty particularly produced in their ſubjects, he had more important, and more engaging matter to diſcourſe of, and to relate, than if he had been to deſcribe battles, and univerſal commotions; inſomuch, that I often find him inſipid when he runs over the deaths of thoſe brave men, as if he feared we ſhould think them too numerous and tedious. This kind of hiſtoriography is by much the moſt uſeful. Public commotions depend moſt upon the conduct of fortune; private ones upon our own. This work of Tacitus is rather a judgment given upon facts, than a deduction of hiſtory. There are more leſſons than ſtories in it: it is not a book to read, but to ſtudy and learn; it is full of opinions, ſome right, others wrong: it is a nurſery of ethics and politics, for the uſe and ornament of ſuch as have any ſhare in the government of the world. He always uſes ſolid and vigorous arguments in a ſharp, ſubtle manner, according to the affected ſtyle of that age: and was ſo fond of the ſublime that, where ſharpneſs and ſubtlety were wanting in the matter, he ſupplied the defect with lofty ſwelling words. His way of writing is much like that of Seneca. His ſtyle ſeems to me to be the more nervous, Seneca's

more

more ſharp. But Tacitus's hiſtory is the moſt proper for a troubled, ſickly ſtate, as ours is at preſent; and you would often ſay, that he both paints and pinches us.

Tacitus, though a ſincere hiſtorian, and zealous for the public good, has cenſured Pompey too ſeverely.

They who doubt of his integrity, plainly enough confeſs they do not like him in other reſpects. His opinions are ſolid, and lean for the moſt part, towards the Roman affairs. Nevertheleſs, I am a little out of temper with him for judging more ſeverely of Pompey, than ſuited with the opinion of thoſe worthy men that lived in the ſame time, and treated with him; and for thinking Pompey, in all reſpects, like Marius and Sylla, excepting that he was more cloſe *. His intention, in the management of affairs, has not been exempted from ambition, nor revenge; and his very friends were afraid that his victory would have tranſported him beyond the bounds of reaſon; but not a degree ſo much beyond all reſtraint. There is nothing in Pompey's life that carries the marks of ſuch expreſs cruelty and tyranny. Neither ought we to compare ſuſpicion to evidence; conſequently I do not believe Tacitus in this matter. Suppoſing his narratives to be genuine and right, it might, perhaps, be argued, even from hence, that they are not always exactly applied to the concluſions of his judgments, which he always follows, according to the bias he has taken, often beyond the ſubject he opens to us, to which he has not deigned to give the leaſt regard. He needs no excuſe for having approved of the religion of his time; as it was enjoined by the laws, and for having been ignorant of the true religion. This was his misfortune, not his fault.

Whether he formed a right judgment of a paragraph in a letter from Tiberius to the ſenate.

I have principally conſidered his judgment, and do not fully underſtand it every where; and theſe words, particularly in a letter which Tiberius, when old and ſick, ſent to the ſenate, "† What ſhall I write "to you, ſirs, or how ſhall I write to you, "or what ſhall I not write to you at this juncture? May "the gods and goddeſſes lay a worſe puniſhment upon

* Tacit. Hiſt. lib. ii. cap. 38. † Tacit. Annal. lib. vi. cap. 6.

"me,

"me, than what I feel every day, if I know." I do not see why he should so positively apply them to a stinging remorse of Tiberius's conscience. At least, when I was in the same case, I perceived no such thing.

Blamed by Montaigne for making an apology for having spoke of himself in his history.

This is also deemed to me a little mean in Tacitus, that, being to say he had exercised a certain § honourable office of the magistracy, he excused himself by saying that he did not mention it by way of ostentation. This seems a little too low an expression for such a genius as his was; since for a man not to do himself justice, implies some want of courage; one of a rough and lofty judgment, which is also safe and sound, makes use of his own example upon all occasions, as well as those of others; and gives evidence as freely of himself as of a third person. We are to supersede these common rules of civility in favour of truth and liberty. I presume not only to speak of myself, but of myself alone. When I write of any think else, I mistake my way, and lose my subject: yet I am not so indiscreetly enamoured with, or so bigotted to, and inwrapped up in myself, that I cannot distinguish, and consider myself apart, as I do a neighbour, or a tree. It is equally a failing for a man not to discern all his ability, or to say more than he sees in himself. We owe more love to God than to ourselves, and know him less; yet we speak of him as much as we please.

The character of Tacitus to be judged of by his writings.

If the writings of Tacitus make any discovery of his qualities, he was a great man, upright and bold; not of a superstitious, but of a philosophical, and generous virtue.

Tacitus, and all historians are to be commended for relating extraordinary facts and popular rumours.

A man may think him bold in his stories; as where he says that a soldier carrying a bundle of wood, his hands were so frozen, and stuck so fast to it, that they were severed by it from his arms. I always, in such things, submit to such great authorities †. What he says also of Vespasian ‡, that by

§ "Domitianus edidit ludos seculares, iisque intentius affui, sacerdotio Quindecimvirali præditus, actum Prætor, quod non jactantia refero," &c. Tacit. Annal. lib xi. cap. 11.

† Tacit. Annal. xiii. cap. 35.

‡ Hist. lib. iv. cap. 81.

the

the favour of the god Serapis, he cured a blind woman in Alexandria, by anointing her eyes with his ſpittle, and I know not what other miracles; he does it by the example and duty of all good hiſtorians, who keep regiſters of ſuch events as are of importance. Among public accidents are alſo common rumours and opinions. It is their part to relate the things commonly believed, not to regulate them. This is the province of the divines and the philoſophers, who are the guides of men's conſciences. Therefore it was that this companion of his, and as great a man as himſelf, very wiſely ſaid, *Equidem plura tranſcribo quàm credo: nam nec affirmare ſuſtineo, de quibus dubito, nec ſubducere quæ accepi* *, "indeed I ſet down more things than I believe; for as I "cannot endure to affirm things whereof I doubt, ſo I "cannot ſmother what I have heard." And this other; *Hæc neque affirmare neque refellere operæ pretium eſt—famæ rerum ſtandum eſt* †, "it is not worth while to affirm, or "to confute theſe matters." We muſt ſtand to report: and as he wrote in an age when the belief of prodigies began to decline, he ſays, he would not, nevertheleſs, omit to inſert in his annals, and to give a place to things received by ſo many worthy men, and with ſo great a reverence of antiquity. This was well ſaid. Let them deliver us hiſtory more as they receive, than believe it. I, who am a monarch of the ſubject I treat of, and who am accountable to nobody, do not, however, believe every thing I write. I often hazard the ſallies of my fancy, of which I am very diffident, as well as certain quibbles, at which I ſhake my ears; but I let them take their chance. I ſee that by ſuch things ſome get reputation: it is not for me alone to judge. I preſent myſelf ſtanding, and lying on my face, my back, my right ſide and my left, and in all my natural poſtures. Wits, though equal in force, are not always equal in taſte and application. This is what my memory has furniſhed me with in groſs, and with uncertainty enough. All judgments in the groſs are weak and imperfect.

* Q. Curtius, lib. ix. chap. 1. tranſlated by Vaugelas.
† Tit. Liv. lib. i. in the preface, and lib. viii. cap. 6.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of Vanity.

Montaigne's pleaſant apology for his undertaking this regiſter of his own humours.

THERE is not perhaps any vanity more expreſs, than to write of it ſo vainly. That which the Divinity has ſo divinely delivered of it to us, ought to be carefully and continually meditated by men of underſtanding. Who ſees not that I have taken a road, in which I ſhall inceſſantly and eaſily jog on, ſo long as I can come at ink and paper? I can give no account of my life by my actions; fortune has placed them too low: I muſt do it by my fancies. And yet I have ſeen a gentleman who only communicated his life by the workings of his belly: you might ſee in his houſe a regular range of cloſeſtool-pans of ſeven or eight days ſtanding: that was all his ſtudy, all his diſcourſe; all other talk ſtunk in his noſtrils. Theſe here, but a little more decent, are the excrements of an old mind, ſometimes hard, ſometimes looſe, and always indigeſted; and when ſhall I have done repreſenting the continual agitation and mutation of my thoughts, on whatever ſubject comes into my head, ſeeing that Diomedes * wrote ſix thouſand books upon the ſole ſubject of Grammar? What then muſt be the product of loquacity, if the world was ſtuffed with ſuch a horrible load of volumes to facilitate pronunciation and free utterance? So many words about words only. O Pythagoras, why did'ſt not thou lay this tempeſt! They

* Here Montaigne ſeems to have relied ſimply upon his memory, and to have miſtaken Diomedes for Dydimus the grammarian, who, as Seneca ſays, wrote four thouſand books on queſtions of vain literature, which was the principal ſtudy of the ancient grammarians. In ſome of theſe books was an enquiry into Homer's native country; in others, who was the true mother of Æneas; in ſome, whether Anacreon was the greater whore-maſter, or drunkard; in others, whether Sappho was a common ſtrumpet; and the like things, which were better unlearnt, if you knew them. Seneca, epiſt. 88.

accuſed

accuſed one Galba of old for living idly; he made anſwer, "that every one ought to give account of his actions, but not of his leiſure *." He was miſtaken, for juſtice takes cognizance of, and paſſes cenſure even upon thoſe that pick ſtraws.

Sorry ſcribblers ought to be ſuppreſſed by the laws, and why.

But there ſhould be ſome reſtraint of law againſt fooliſh and impertinent ſcribblers, as well as againſt vagabonds and idle perſons; which, if there was, both I and an hundred others would be baniſhed the kingdom. I do not ſpeak this in jeſt: ſcribbling ſeems to be a ſymptom of a licentious age. When did we write ſo much as ſince our civil wars? When the Romans ſo much, as when their commonwealth was running to ruin? Beſides that the refining of wits does not make people wiſer in ſtate policy. This idle employment ſprings from hence, that every one applies himſelf negligently to the duty of his vocation, and is diverted from it. The corruption of the age is a fund to which each of us contribute. Some treachery, others injuſtice, irreligion, tyranny, avarice, and cruelty, according as they are in power; and the weaker ſort, of which I am one, contribute folly, vanity, and idleneſs. It ſeems as if it were the ſeaſon for vain things when the hurtful oppreſs us. In a time when doing ill is ſo common, to do nothing but what ſignifies nothing is a kind of commendation. It is my comfort, that I ſhall be one of the laſt that ſhall be called to account; and whilſt the greater offenders are taken to taſk, I ſhall have leiſure to amend; for, it would, methinks be againſt reaſon to proſecute little inconveniences, whilſt we are infected with the greater. As the phyſician, Philotimus, ſaid

* This was a ſaying of the emperor Galba, in his life by Suetonius, §. 9. It muſt be allowed here, either that Montaigne did not quote this from the original, or that his memory failed him; for, if he had meant the emperor Galba, he would not have called him, as he here does, one Galba of old. This is ſo palpable, that in the edition of his Eſſays, printed at Paris in 1602, by Abel l'Angelier, in that part of the index referring to this paſſage, care is taken to point out expreſsly, that the Galba here mentioned is to be diſtinguiſhed from the emperor of this name.

to one who presented him his finger to dress, and who he perceived, both by his complexion and his breath, had an ulcer in his lungs: "Friend," said he, "this is not a "time for you to be paring your nails *."

How statesmen amuse the people while they most abuse them.

And yet I saw, some years ago, a person whose memory I have in very great esteem, who in the very height of our great disorders, when there was neither law nor justice, nor magistrate that performed his office, any more than there is now, published I know not what pitiful reformations about cloaths, cookery, and chicanery in law. These are amusements wherewith to feed a people that are ill used, to shew that they are not totally forgot. Those others do the same, who insist upon a strict prohibition of the forms of speaking, dances and games, to a people totally abandoned to all sort of execrable vices. It is no time to bathe and clean a man's self when he is seized with a violent fever. It is for the Spartiates only to fall to combing and curling themselves, when they are just upon the point of running head-long into some extreme danger of their life.

Montaigne wiser and more moderate in prosperity than adversity.

For my part, I have yet a worse custom, that if my shoe go awry, I let my shirt and my cloak do so too; I scorn to mend myself by halves: when I am in a bad plight, I feed upon mischief; I abandon myself through despair; let myself go towards the precipice, and as the saying is, "throw the helve after the "hatchet." I am obstinate in growing worse, and think myself no more worth my own care; I am either good or ill throughout. It is a favour to me, that the desolation of this kingdom falls out in the desolation of my age: I am less concerned that my ills be multiplied than that my goods be disturbed. The words I utter in misfortune, are words of spite. My courage sets up its bristles instead of letting them down; and, contrary to others, I am more devout in good than evil fortune,

* Plutarch in his treatise How to distinguish the flatterer from the friend, chap. 31.

according to the precept of Xenophon, if not according to his reaſon, and am more ready to turn up my eyes to heaven to return my thanks, than to crave; I am more ſollicitous to improve my health when I am well, than to recover it when I have loſt it. Proſperities are the ſame diſcipline and inſtruction to me, that adverſities and perſecutions are to others: as if good fortune were inconſiſtent with a good conſcience, men never grow good, but in ill fortune. Good fortune is to me a ſingular ſpur to modeſty and moderation. Intreaty wins me, a menace checks me, favour makes me bend, fear ſtiffens me.

Change pleaſing to men.

Amongſt human conditions this is very common, viz. to be better pleaſed with ſtrange things than our own, and to love motion and change.

Ipſa dies ideò nos grato perluit hauſtu,
Quòd permutatis hora recurrit aquis *.

The ſun itſelf makes the more pleaſant tour,
Becauſe it changes horſes every hour.

I have my ſhare. Thoſe who follow the other extreme by being pleaſed with themſelves; who value what they have above all the reſt, and conclude no beauty can be greater than what they ſee, if they are not wiſer than we, are really more happy. I do not envy their wiſdom, but their good fortune. This greedy appetite for new and unknown things makes me the more deſirous of travel: but many more circumſtances contribute to it. I am very willing to withdraw from the government of my family. There is, I confeſs, a kind of convenience in commanding, though it were but in a barn, and to be obeyed by one's ſervants: but it is too uniform and languiſhing a pleaſure, and is moreover of neceſſity mixt with many vexatious thoughts; as one while the proverty and the oppreſſion of your dependants; another, quar-

* Petronius Arbiter. Epig.

rels amongſt neighbours: another while the incroachment they make upon you afflicts you;

Aut verberatæ grandine vineæ,
Fundusque mendax, arbore nunc aquas
Cu'pante, nunc torrentia argros
Sydera, nunc hyemes iniquas *.

Whether his vines be ſmit with hail,
Whether his promis'd harveſt fail,
Perfidious to his toil;
Whether his drooping trees complain
Of angry winter's chilling rain,
Or ſtars that parch the ſoil.

and that God ſcarce in ſix months ſends a ſeaſon to the ſatisfaction of your bailiff; but that if it ſerves the vines it hurts the meadows.

Aut nimiis torret fervoribus ætherius ſol,
Aut ſubiti perimunt imbres, gelidæque pruinæ,
Flabráque ventorum violento turbine vexant †.

Whether the ſun, with its too ſcorching pow'rs,
Bruns up the fruits, or clouds them drown with ſhow'rs;
Or chill'd by to much ſnow, they ſoon decay;
Or ſudden whilwinds blow them all away.

To which may be added, the new and neat-made ſhoe of the man of old ‡, that hurts your foot; and that a ſtranger does not underſtand how much it coſts you, and what you contribute to maintain that ſhew of order which is ſeen in your family, and which perhaps you buy too dear.

* Horat. lib. iii. ode 1. ver. 25. &c. † Lucret. lib. v. ver. 216, &c. ‡ Plutarch's life of Paulus Æmilius, chap. 3.

I came

I came late to the government of a family. They whom nature sent into the world before me, eased me of that trouble for a long while: so that I had already taken another turn more suitable to my humour; yet for so much as I have seen, it is an employment more troublesome than difficult. Whoever is capable of any thing else, will easily be capable of that. Had I a mind to be rich, that way would seem too long; I had served my kings, a more profitable traffick than any other. Since I pretend to nothing but the reputation of having got nothing, as I have squandered nothing, conformable to the rest of my life, improper either to do good or ill of any moment; and that I only desire to rub on, I can do it thanks be to God, without any great attention. At the worst, always prevent poverty by lessening your expence: it is that which I make my great concern, and to live within bounds before necessity compels me. As to the rest, I have sufficiently settled my thoughts to live upon less than I have, and to live contentedly. *Non æstimatione census, verum victu, atque cultu, terminatur pecuniæ modus* *. "It is not by the value of our possessions, but by our diet and clothing that our expences should be regulated." My real need does not so wholly take up all I have, but misfortune may fasten her teeth without biting me to the quick. My presence, as contemptible as it is, and as little as I know of matters, is of service in my domestic affairs; I employ myself in them, but it goes against the grain, considering also, that while I burn my candle at one end by myself, the other end is not spared.

The government of a family more troublesome than hard, and little understood by our author.

* Cicer. Paradox. vi. cap. 2. Mere common sense demonstrates this to the lowest class of people, who when they see a purse-proud creature, ridicule him by saying: "if he is so rich, let him dine twice a day." This, though a common sarcasm (in France) contains a wise hint, very little known to most great men, who for want of it are engaged in employing one half of their lives to render the other wretched.

The expence of travelling did not keep him from it.

Journeys do me no harm but only by their expence, which is great, and more than I am well able to bear; being always wont to travel with not only a neceſſary, but a handſome equipage. I muſt make them ſo much the ſhorter and the fewer, and therein I ſpend but the ſurplus, and what I have reſerved for ſuch purpoſe, delaying and timing my motion till that be ready. I deſire not that the pleaſure of going abroad ſhould ſpoil the pleaſure of my being retired at home. On the contrary, I intend they ſhall nouriſh and favour one another. Fortune has aſſiſted me in this, that ſince my principal profeſſion in this life, was to live at eaſe, and rather to have nothing to do than too much, ſhe has ſpared me the neceſſity of growing rich, to provide for a multitude of heirs. If there be not enough for one, of that whereof I had ſo much plenty, at his peril be it; his imprudence will not deſerve that I ſhould wiſh him any more. Every one, according to the example of Phocion, provides ſufficiently for his children, who provides for them ſo as they bear a reſemblance to himſelf. I ſhould by no means like of Crates's way. He left his money in the hand of a banker, with this condition; that if his children were fools, he ſhould then give it to them; if witty, he ſhould then diſtribute it to the fooliſh among the people. As if fools, for being leſs capable of living without riches, were more capable of uſing them. So it is that the damage which is occaſioned by my abſence, ſeems not to deſerve, ſo long as I am able to ſupport it, that I ſhould wave the occaſions of diverting myſelf from that troubleſome attendance.

Domeſtic affairs are always teazing.

There is always ſomething that goes croſs. The affairs one while of one houſe, and then of another, almoſt diſtract you. You pry into every thing too near; your perſpicacity hurts you here as well as in other things. I ſteal away from occaſions of vexing myſelf, and turn from the knowledge of things that go amiſs, and yet cannot I ſo order it, but that every hour I ſtumble at ſomething or other that diſpleaſes me. And the tricks

which

which they moſt conceal from me, are thoſe that I beſt know. Some there are that a man himſelf muſt help to conceal, that they may do the leſs miſchief. Vain vexations, vain ſometimes, but always vexatious. The ſmalleſt and ſlighteſt impediments are the moſt piercing: and as ſmall letters moſt tire the eyes, ſo do little affairs the moſt diſturb us. A route of little ills more offend than the violence of any ſingle one, how great ſoever. Domeſtic thorns, the more numerous and delicate they are, they prick the deeper; and without warning, eaſily ſurprize us, when we leaſt ſuſpect them. I am no philoſopher. Evils oppreſs me according to their importance, and they import as much according to the form as the matter; and very often more. I ſee farther into them than the vulgar, yet I have more patience. Finally, they vex me, if they do not hurt me. Life is a tender thing, and eaſily diſturbed. Since my face looks a little more moroſe, *(nemo enim reſiſlit ſibi cum cœperit impelli* *: "for no man recovers himſelf, after he once begins to "ſtoop;)" for the moſt trivial cauſe imaginable, I irritate that humour, which afterwards nouriſhes and exaſperates itſelf of its own accord; attracting and heaping up matter upon matter whereon to feed.

Stillicidi caſus lapidem cavat †.

A falling drop at laſt will cave a ſtone.

Gutta cavat ſaxum non vi, ſed ſæpe cadendo.

Theſe continual trickling drops corrode and prey upon me. Ordinary inconveniences are never light, they are continual and irreparable; and when they ſpring from family-concerns are continual and inſeparable. When I conſider my affairs at a diſtance, and in groſs, I find, perhaps, becauſe my memory is none of the beſt, that

* Seneca, epiſt. 13. † Lucret. lib. i. ver. 314.

they have improved hitherto beyond my reason and reckoning. Methinks my revenue is greater than it is; the prosperity betrays me: but when I pry more narrowly into the business, and see how all things go separately,

Tum vero in curas animum diducimus omnes *.

—— —— then my breast
Is with innumerable cares oppress'd.

I have a thousand things to desire and to fear. To give them quite over is very easy for me to do: but to look after them without trouble is very hard. It is a miserable thing to be in a place where every thing you see employs and concerns you. And I fancy that I more cheerfully enjoy the pleasures of another man's house, and with freer and purer relish. Diogenes †, according to my humour, answered him who asked what sort of wine he liked best, "that which is not my own."

Montaigne had no taste for building, or other pleasures of a retired life.

My father took a delight in building at Montaigne, where he was born, and in all the management of domestic affairs, I love to follow his examples and rules; and shall engage those who are to succeed me, as much as in me lies, to do the same. Could I do better for him, I would; and am proud that his will is still performing and acting by me. God forbid, that I should ever fail in any resemblance of life to so good a father. As I have taken in hand to finish a certain old wall, and to repair a ruinous piece of building, I have really done it more out of respect to his design, than to my own satisfaction; and am angry at myself, for being so lazy that I have not proceeded further to finish what he began in his house; and the more, because I am very likely to be the last possessor of my race, and to give the last hand to it. For, as to my own par-

* Virg. Æn. lib. v. ver. 720.
† Diog. Laert. in the life of Diogenes the Cynic. lib. vi. § 54.

ticular

ticular application, neither this pleasure of building, which they say is so bewitching, nor hunting, nor gardens, nor the other pleasures of a retired life, are capable of giving me much amusement. And it is what I am angry at myself for, as I am for all other opinions that are incommodious to me; which I would not so much care to have vigorous and learned, as I would have them easy and convenient for life. They are true and sound enough, if they are profitable and pleasing. Such as hearing me declare my ignorance in husbandry, whisper in my ear, that it is out of disdain, that I neglect to know the instruments of husbandry, its season and order; how they cultivate my vines, how they graft, and to know the names and forms of herbs and fruit, and the dressing the meat by which I live, with the names and prices of the stuffs I wear, because I have set my heart upon some sublimer knowledge, hurt me in saying so. This is folly, and rather stupidity than glory; I had rather be a good horseman than a good logician.

Quin tu aliquid saltem potius quorum indiget usus,
Viminibus mollique paras detexere junco ?*

Mind rather what the wants of life demand;
To weaving willow twigs apply thy hand.

We embarrass our thoughts about the general concern, and about universal causes and effects, which are very well carried on without us, and leave our own business behind, with the care of our own persons, which are nearer to us, than that of any man whatever. Now I am indeed for the most part at home, and wish to be better pleased there than elsewhere.

Sit meæ sedes utinam senectæ,
Sit modus lasso maris, & viarum,
Militiæque †.

* Virg. Eclog. ii. ver. 71. † Horat. lib. ii. ode 6. ver. 6.

May that which was the Græcians ſeat
Afford my age a calm retreat;
Be it my port of reſt and eaſe,
From warfare, journeys, and rough ſeas.

I know not whether or no I ſhall bring it about; I could wiſh, that inſtead of ſome other parcel of his eſtate, my father had conſigned to me the paſſionate affection he had in his old age to his œconomy. He was happy in that he could accommodate his deſires to his fortune, and ſatisfy himſelf with what he had. State-philoſophy may to much purpoſe condemn the meanneſs and ſterility of my employment, if I can once come to reliſh it as he did. I am of opinion, that the moſt honourable calling is to ſerve the public, and to be uſeful to many. *Fructus enim ingenii, & virtutis, omniſque præſtantiæ tum maximus accipitur, quum in proximum quemque confertur* *; "we reap "moſt advantage from wit, virtue, and all ſorts of merit, "when every one of our neareſt relations has a ſhare of "it." For my part, I quit all claim to it; partly out of lazineſs, and partly out of conſcience; for where I ſee the weight that lies upon ſuch employments, I perceive alſo the little means I have to contribute to them; and Plato, who was a maſter in all political government, nevertheleſs abſtained from them. I content myſelf with enjoying the world without being perplexed with it, and only to live an irreproachable life, and ſuch a one as may neither be a burden to myſelf, nor to any other.

His wiſh that he could abandon himſelf to the government of ſome truſty friend.

Never did any man more full and freely reſign himſelf to the care and government of a third perſon, than I would do, had I any one to truſt in. One of my wiſhes at this time would be, to have a ſon-in-law that knew how to humour my old age, and to lull it aſleep; into whoſe hands I might depoſite the chief and ſole management and uſe of all my goods, that he might diſpoſe of them as I do, and get by them what I get, provided that he had a heart truly grateful

* Cicero de Amicitia, cap. 19.

and

and friendly. But, what shall we say? we live in a world where loyalty in one's own children is unknown.

He loved to repose a confidence in his domestics.

He that has the charge of my purse upon travel, has it purely, and without controul; so that he might easily deceive me in reckoning; and, if he is not a devil, I oblige him to be honest, by so entire a trust: *multi fallere docuerunt, dum timent falli, & aliis jus peccandi suspicando fecerunt* ‡. "Many have taught others to deceive, "by fearing to be deceived; and by suspecting them, "have given them a handle to be unjust." The most common security I take of my people, is their ignorance: I never suspect any to be vicious, till I have found them so, and repose the most confidence in the younger sort, who I think are least corrupted by bad examples. I had rather be told at two months end, that I have expended four hundred crowns, than to have my ears dinned every night with three, five, and seven; and yet I have suffered as little as any body by this kind of larceny. It is true, I am willing enough not to know it; I do in some sort in good earnest, harbour a kind of perplexed, uncertain knowledge of my money; for to a certain proportion, I am content with room to doubt. One must leave a little for the infidelity or indiscretion of a servant: if we have enough in gross to do our business, let the overplus of fortune's liberality run a little more freely at her mercy; it is the gleaners perquisite. After all, I do not so much value the fidelity of my people, as I contemn their injury. What a vile and ridiculous thing it is for a man to set his heart on his money, to delight himself with handling and telling it! That is the way by which avarice makes its approaches.

He avoided an inspection into his own affairs by mere negligence.

In eighteen years that I have had my estate in my own hands, I could never prevail with myself, either to inspect my deeds, or my principal affairs, which ought of necessity to pass through my knowledge and care. It is not a philosophical disdain of

‡ Seneca, epist. 3.

worldly

worldly and tranſitory things. My taſte is not refined to that degree; and I value them at leaſt at what they are worth; but it is in truth an inexcuſable and childiſh lazineſs and negligence. What would I not rather do than read a covenant, and ſooner than be a ſlave to my own buſineſs, and to tumble over a bundle of old muſty deeds? or, which is worſe, thoſe of another man, as ſo many do now a-days to get money? I grudge nothing but care and trouble, and aim at nothing ſo much as to be quite careleſs and indolent. I was much fitter, I believe, could it have been without obligation and ſervitude, to have lived upon another man's fortune: yet I do not know, when I examine it nearer, whether, according to my humour, what I ſuffer from my affairs and ſervants, and domeſtics, has not in it ſomething more abject, troubleſome, and tormenting, than there would be in ſerving a man better born than myſelf, who would guide me with a gentle rein, and a little at my own eaſe. *Servitus obedientia eſt fracti animi, et abjecti, arbitrio carentis ſuo* *; "ſervitude is the obedience of a broken "ſpirit and an abject mind, wanting its own free-will."

Poverty affected by Crates.

Crates did worſe, who threw himſelf into the franchiſe of poverty, only to rid himſelf of the inconveniencies and cares of his family. This is what I would not do; I hate poverty equally with pain; but I could be content to change the kind of life I live for another that was meaner, and had leſs buſineſs. When abſent from home, I ſtrip myſelf of all ſuch thoughts; and would be leſs concerned for the ruin of a tower, than I am, when preſent, at the fall of a tile. My mind is eaſily compoſed when I am at a diſtance, but ſuffers as much as that of the meaneſt peaſant at what happens in the place where I am. The reins of my bridle being wrong placed, or a ſtrap flapping againſt my leg, will put me out of humour a day together. I raiſe my courage well enough againſt inconveniencies, lift up my eyes I cannot.

* Cicero, paradox. v. cap. 4.

Senſus

Senſus, ô ſuperi, ſenſus.

The ſenſes! O ye gods, the ſenſes!

I am at home reſponſible for whatever goes amiſs. Few maſters, I ſpeak of thoſe of middle rank, as mine is, (and if there be any ſuch, they are happy) can rely ſo much upon another, but that great part of the burthen will lie upon their own ſhoulders. This takes much from my grace in entertaining ſtrangers, ſo that I have perhaps detained ſome rather out of expectation of a good dinner, than by my behaviour; and I loſe much of the pleaſure I ought to reap at my own houſe, from the viſits and company of my friends. The moſt ridiculous carriage of a gentleman in his own houſe, is when he is buſtling about the buſineſs of the family, whiſpering one ſervant, and frowning at another. It ought inſenſibly to ſlide on like a gentle ſtream; and I think it equally unhandſome to talk much to their gueſts of their entertainment, whether by way of bragging or excuſe. I love order and cleanlineſs,

& cantharus, & lanx
Oſtendunt mihi me[*].

Glaſſes well rins'd, my table always grace,
And diſhes ſhine, in which I ſee my face.

more than profuſion: and at home have an exact regard to neceſſity, little to outward ſhew. If a footman falls to cuffs at another man's houſe, or if a diſh be ſpilt, you only laugh at it. You ſleep whilſt the maſter of the houſe is ſtating a bill of fare with his ſteward, for your next day's entertainment. I ſpeak according as I do myſelf, eſteeming nevertheleſs good huſbandry in general, conſidering how pleaſant an amuſement a quiet and happy management, carried regularly on, is to ſome

[*] Horat. lib. i. epiſt. 5. ver. 23, 24.

natures

natures; and not willing to annex my own errors and inconveniencies to the thing, nor to contradict Plato, who looks upon it as the moſt pleaſant employment for every one to do his own buſineſs, without wrong to another. When I travel, I have nothing to care for but myſelf, and the laying out of my money; which is diſpoſed of by one ſingle precept.

Montaigne not at all inclined to hoard money, but knew how to lay it out.

Too many things are required to the raking it together, of which I have no notion; in ſpending it I underſtand a little, and how to give my expences a reputation, which is indeed their principal uſe. But I rely too vainly upon this, which renders it unequal and unfaſhionable, and moreover immoderate, in both views. If it makes a ſhow, if it ſerve the turn, I indiſcreetly let it run, and as indiſcreetly tie up my purſe-ſtrings if it does not ſhine and pleaſe me. Whatever it be, whether art or nature, that imprints in us the condition of living to pleaſe others, it does us much more harm than good. We deprive ourſelves of our own profit, to accommodate appearances to the common opinion. We care not ſo much what our being is, as to ourſelves, and in reality, as what it is in the public obſervation. Even the talents of wit, and wiſdom itſelf, ſeem fruitleſs to us, if only enjoyed by ourſelves, and if it produce not itſelf to the view and approbation of others. There is a ſort of men whoſe gold runs in cluſters imperceptibly under-ground; others expend it all in plates and leaves, ſo that to the one a liard * is worth a crown, and others the reverſe: the world eſteeming its uſe and value, according to the diſplay of it. All curious ſolicitude about riches ſmells of avarice: even the very diſpoſing of it with a too punctual and artificial liberality, is not worth a painful thought. He that will order his expence to juſt ſo much, makes it too pinched and narrow. The ſaving or ſpending money are of themſelves indifferent things, and receive no co-

* A piece of copper money worth three farthings.

lour

lour of good or ill, but according to the application of the will.

The depraved morals of his country, another motive of Montaigne's travelling.

The other cauſe that tempts me to theſe journeys, is a nonconformity to the preſent manners of our ſtate; I could eaſily put up with this corruption for the ſake of the public intereſt,

pejoraque ſæcula ferri
Temporibus, quorum ſceleri non invenit ipſa
Nomen, & à nullo poſuit natura metallo *.

Worſe than the iron age, ſo bad theſe times!
Nature no metal hath to name our crimes.

but not for my own. I am in particular too much oppreſſed. For in my neighbourhood we are of late, by the long licenciouſneſs of our civil wars, grown old in ſo riotous a form of ſtate,

Quippe, ubi fas verſum atque nefas †.

Where impious mortals right and wrong confound.

that in earneſt, it is a wonder how it can ſubſiſt.

Armati terram exercent, ſemperque recentes
Convectare juvat prædas, & vivere rapto ‡.

With arms upon their backs they plow the ſoil,
And their delight is to ſubſiſt by ſpoil.

In fine, I ſee by our example, that the ſociety of men is maintained and held together at any price: in what condition ſoever they are placed they will ſtill cloſe and ſtick together, both moving and in heaps; as uneven

* Juven. ſat. 13. ver. 28, &c.
† Geo. lib. i. ver. 504.
‡ Virg. Æn. lib. vii. ver. 748.

bodies,

bodies, that ſhuffled together without order, find of themſelves a means to unite and ſettle one among another, often better than they could have been diſpoſed by art. King Philip muſtered up a rabble of the moſt wicked and incorrigible raſcals he could pick out, and put them all together into a city he had cauſed to be build for that purpoſe*, which bore their name. I reckon that they even from the vices, erected a government amongſt themſelves, and a commodious and juſt ſociety. I ſee not one action, either three, or an hundred, but manners, in common and received uſe, ſo cruel, eſpecially in inhumanity and treachery, which are to me the worſt of all vices, that I have not the heart to think of them without horror; and almoſt as much admire as I deteſt them. The exerciſe of theſe notorious villanies carries as great ſigns of vigour and fortitude of mind, as of error and diſorder. Neceſſity reconciles and brings men together; and this accidental union is afterwards cemented by itſelf into laws: for there have been as ſavage ones as any human opinion could conceive, which nevertheleſs have maintained their body with as much health and length of life as any that Plato or Ariſtotle could invent. And certainly, all theſe deſcriptions of civil government feigned by art, are found to be ridiculous, and unfit for practice.

The drift of all diſputes about the beſt form of government.

Theſe great and tedious debates about the beſt form of ſociety, and the moſt commodious rules to bind us, are debates only proper for the exerciſe of our wits; as in the arts there are ſeveral ſubjects which have their being in agitation and controverſy, and have no life but there. Such an idea of government might be of ſome value in a new world; but ours is a world ready made to our hands, and formed to certain cuſtoms. We do not beget it as Pyrrha, or Cadmus did theirs. By what means ſoever we may claim the privilege to ſet it to rights, and give it a new form, we can hardly twiſt it from its wonted bent, but we ſhall break

* Πονηρόπολις, or Rogues-town. Plin. Nat. Hiſt. lib. iv. cap. 11.

all.

all. Solon being asked, whether he had established the best laws he could for the Athenians; "yes," said he, "of "those they could receive." Varro excuses himself after the same manner, that if they were to begin to write of religion, he would say what he believed; but it being already received, he would write more according to usance than nature. Not according to opinion, but in truth and reality, the best and most excellent government for every nation is that under which it is maintained. Its form and essential convenience depends upon custom. We are apt to be displeased at the present condition; but I nevertheless maintain, that to desire an oligarchy in a popular state, or another sort of government in monarchy than that already established, is both vice and folly.*

Ayme l'estat tel que tu le vois estre;
S'il est royal ayme la royauté,
S'il est de peu, ou bien communauté,
Ayme l'aussi, car dieu t'y a faict naistre.*

Approve the government, whate'er it be;
If regal, praise it in the first degree;
Or if 'tis formed on democratic sway,
Thou owest still th' allegiance to obey.

So writ the good Monsieur de Pybrac, whom we have lately lost, a man of so excellent a wit, so sound opinions, and so sweet a behaviour. This loss, and that at the same time we have had of Monsieur de Foix, are of so great importance to the crown, that I do not know whether there is another couple left in France worthy to supply the room of these two Gascons for sincerity and wisdom, in our king's council. They were both great geniuses, and certainly, according to the age, rare and excellent, each of them in his way. But what destiny was it placed in these times, men so remote from, and so disproportioned to, our corruptions and intestine tumults?

* Pybrac aux quadrins.

Nothing is more dangerous to a ſtate than a great change.

Nothing preſſes ſo hard upon a ſtate as innovation: change only gives form to juſtice and tyranny. When any piece is out of its place, it may be propt; one may obviate the alteration and corruption natural to all things leſt they carry us too far from our beginnings and principles: but to undertake to new mould ſo great a maſs, and to change the foundations of ſo vaſt a building, is for them to do, who to make clean, rub all out; who are for reforming particular defects by an univerſal confuſion, and for curing diſeaſes by death: *non tam commutandarum quam evertendarum rerum cupidi* *; "not ſo de-"ſirous of changing, as of overthrowing things." The world is incapable to cure itſelf; and ſo impatient of any thing that preſſes it, that it thinks of nothing but diſengaging itſelf, coſt what it will. We ſee by a thouſand examples, that it ordinarily cures itſelf to its coſt: the diſcharge of a preſent evil is no cure, if there be not a general amendment of condition. The ſurgeon's end is not to deaden the bad fleſh, which is but the beginning of his cure; his view is likewiſe to fill up the wound with natural fleſh, and to reſtore the member to its due ſtate. Whoever only propoſes to himſelf to remove that which offends him, falls ſhort, for good does not neceſſarily ſucceed evil; another evil may ſucceed, and a worſe, as happened to Cæſar's aſſaſſins, who brought the republic to ſuch a paſs, that they had reaſon to repent their having a hand in it. The ſame has ſince happened to ſeveral others, even down to our own times. The French, my contemporaries, know it well enough. All great changes ſhake and diſorder a ſtate.

Remarkable inſtance of the difficulty that attends the reformation of a ſtate.

Whoever would aim directly at a cure, and conſider of it before he began, would not be ſo earneſt to attempt it. Pacuvius Calavius corrected the vice of this proceeding by a notable example. His fellow-citizens having mutinied againſt their magiſtrates, he being a man of great authority in the city of

* Cicer. Offic. lib ii. cap. 1.

Capua,

Capua, found means one day to ſhut up the ſenators in the palace, and calling the people together in the ſquare, he told them, that the day was now come, wherein they were at full liberty to revenge themſelves on the tyrants, by whom they had been ſo long oppreſſed; and whom he had now all alone, and diſarmed at his mercy: adviſing alſo, that they would call them out ſeverally by lot; and particularly determine of each; cauſing whatever ſhould be decreed to be immediately executed *; with this caution that they ſhould at the ſame inſtant depute ſome honeſt man in the place of him that was condemned, to the end there might be no vacancy in the ſenate. They had no ſooner heard the name of one ſenator, but a clamor of univerſal diſlike was raiſed againſt him. I ſee, ſays Pacuvius, that this man muſt be put out; he is a wicked fellow, let us look out a good one in his room: immediately there was a profound ſilence, every one being at a ſtand whom to chooſe. But one, more impudent than the reſt, having named his man, there aroſe yet a greater conſent of voices againſt him, an hundred imperfections being laid to his charge, and as many juſt reaſons preſently given for rejecting him. Theſe contradictory humours growing hot, it fared ſtill worſe with the ſecond ſenator and the third, there being as much diſagreement in the election of the new, as there was conſent in the putting out of the old. In the end, growing weary of this buſtle to no purpoſe, they began ſome one way, and ſome another, to ſteal out of the aſſembly; every one bearing this reſolution in his mind, that the oldeſt and beſt known evil was ever more ſupportable, than one that was new and untried.

To ſee how miſerably we are torn in pieces:
For what have we not done?

Governments ſtand their ground though very much ſhattered.

* All this is mentioned in Titus Livius lib. xxiii. cap. 2, 3. and touched as I think, by a maſterly hand.

Eheu cicatricum, & ſceleris pudet,
Fratrumque : quid nos dura refugimus
Ætas ? quid intactum nefaſti
Liquimus ? Unde manus juventus
Metu deorum continuit ? Quibus
*Pepercit aris *?*

Alas! the ſhameleſs ſcars! the guilty deeds,
When by a brother's hand a brother bleeds!
What crimes have we, a harden'd age, not dar'd?
What ſacred altars have our raſh youth ſpar'd?
Not by the fear of heaven's wrath debarr'd.

I do not preſently conclude in the ſtyle of a prophet,

ipſa ſi velit ſalus,
Servare prorſus non poteſt hanc familiam †.

This family does ſo behave
That providence them cannot ſave.

We are not however perhaps at the laſt gaſp. The preſervation of ſtates is a thing that in all likelihood ſurpaſſes our underſtanding. A civil government, is, as Plato ſays, a mighty thing, and ſo hard to be diſſolved, that it holds out many times againſt mortal and inteſtine diſeaſes, againſt the injury of unjuſt laws, againſt tyranny, the extravagance and ignorance of magiſtrates, and the licentiouſneſs and ſedition of the people. We compare ourſelves in all our fortunes to what is above us, and ſtill look towards our betters: But let us meaſure ourſelves with what is below us, there is no one ſo miſerable but he may find a thouſand examples that will adminiſter conſolation to him. It is our vice that we more unwillingly look upon what is above, than willingly on what is below us; and Solon was uſed to ſay,

* Hor. lib. i. ode 35. ver. 33. † Ter. Adel. act. 4. ſcene 7. ver. 43.

that

that were we to make a heap of all evils together, there is no perſon who would not rather chooſe to bear with thoſe which he ſuffers, than to come to an equal diviſion with all other men from that heap, and take his particular ſhare. Our government is indeed ſick, but there have been others ſicker, without dying. The gods play at tennis with us, and bandy us every way. *Enim vero dii nos homines quaſi pilas habent* *.

Witneſs the Roman empire, and its divers forms.

The ſtars have fatally deſtined the ſtate of Rome for an example of what they could do in this kind: in it are comprized all the forms and adventures that concern a ſtate; all that order or diſorder, good or evil fortune can do. Who then can deſpair of his condition, ſeeing the ſhocks and commotions wherewith ſhe was toſt, and and yet ſupported them all? If the extent of dominion be the health of a ſtate, which I by no means think it is, (and Iſocrates pleaſes me, when he inſtructs Nicocles not to envy princes who have large dominions †, but them who know how to preſerve thoſe that fall into their hands) that of Rome was never ſo ſound, as when it was moſt ſick: the worſt of her forms was the moſt fortunate. A man can hardly diſcern any image of government under the firſt emperors; it was the moſt horrible and groſs confuſion that can be imagined. It ſupported it notwithſtanding, and therein continued, preſerving a monarchy not limited within its own bounds, but ſo many nations, ſo differing, ſo remote, ſo ill-affected, ſo irregularly commanded, and ſo unjuſtly conquered.

——— *nec gentibus ullis.*
Commodat in populum, terræ pelagique potentem,
Invidiam fortuna ſuam ‡.

No foreign potentates did fortune yet
Inſpire with envy againſt Rome ſo great,
That over kingdoms, and their mighty kings,
O'er land and ſeas ſhe ſtretch'd her eagle's wings.

* The words of Plautus in his prologue to the Captives, ver. 22.
† Iſocrates ad Nicoclem, p. 34. ‡ Lucan. lib. i. ver. 82.

Every thing that totters does not tumble. The contexture of so great a body holds by more nails than one. It holds even by its antiquity, like old buildings, from which the foundations are worn away by time, without rough-cast or mortar, which yet live and support themselves by their own weight;

——nec jam validis radicibus hærens,
Pondere tuta suo est *.

Like an old lofty oak, that heretofore
Great conq'rors spoils, and sacred trophies bore.

Montaigne very rationally concludes from the general corruption of the states of Europe that France may be able to stand her ground.

Moreover, to discover only the flank and the graff, is not the right way. In order to judge of the security of a place, it must be examined which way approaches can be made to it, and in what condition the assailant is. Few vessels sink with their own weight, and without some exterior violence. Let us cast our eyes where we will; every thing about us totters: look into all the great states, both of christendom and elsewhere, that are known to us, you will there see evident menaces of alteration and ruin.

Et sua sunt illis incommoda, parque per omnes
Tempestas.

They all promiscuous in misfortunes share,
And the rude tempest rages everywhere.

Astrologers may very well as they do, warn us of great revolutions, and approaching changes: their starry prophesies are present and palpable, they need not look up to heaven to foretel this. There is not only consolation to be extracted from this universal combination of ills and menaces,

* Lucan. lib. i. ver. 138. † Virg. Æneid. ii.

but

but moreover, ſome hopes of the continuation of our ſtate; foraſmuch as naturally nothing falls, where all does. An univerſal ſickneſs is particular health: conformity is an enemy to diſſolution. For my part, I deſpair not, and fancy that I diſcover ways to ſave us.

Deus hæc fortaſſe benigna
Reducet in ſedem vice *.

The gods perhaps with gracious ſway
Will ſoon reſtore the happy day.

Who knows but that God will have it happen, as in human bodies that are purged, and recover a better ſtate of health by long and grievous maladies? What weighs the moſt with me, is, that in reckoning the ſymptoms of our ill, I ſee as many natural ones, and ſuch as heaven ſends us, and that are properly its own, as of thoſe that are owing to our irregularity and imprudence. The very ſtars ſeem to declare, that we have continued long enough, and beyond the ordinary term: and this alſo afflicts me, that the neareſt miſchief which threatens us, is, not an alteration in the entire and ſolid maſs, but its diſſipation and diviſion; the greateſt of all our fears.

Repetition diſagreeable.

I moreover fear, leſt in theſe ravings of mine, the treachery of my memory, ſhould through inadvertence make me write the ſame thing twice. I hate to examine myſelf; and never review, but with an ill-will, what has once eſcaped my pen. I here ſet down nothing new of inſtruction. Theſe are common thoughts; and having perhaps conceived them an hundred times, I am afraid I have ſet them down ſomewhere elſe already. Repetition is every where diſguſting, though it were in Homer; but much more in things that have only a ſuperficial and tranſitory ſhew. I do not love inculcation, even

* Horat. Epod. ode 13. ver. 10.

in useful things, as in Seneca. Neither the custom of the Stoical school, to repeat upon every subject at length, the general principles and suppositions, and always to advance common and universal reasons.

Our author's treacherous memory.

My memory grows worse every day:

Pocula Lethæos ut si ducentia somnos
Arente fauce traxerim.

Apt to let slip my argument or theme,
As if I had drank deep of Lethe's stream.

Though hitherto, thanks be to God, no difficulty has happened; and though others seek time and opportunity to think of what they have to say, I must for the future avoid all such preparation, for fear of tying myself to some indispensable obligation. To be tied and bound to a thing, and to depend upon so weak an instrument as my memory, puts me quite out: I never read this following story, but I am offended at it with a proper and natural resentment. Lyncestes, accused of conspiracy against Alexander, the day that he was brought before the army, according to custom, to be heard what he could say for himself, had prepared a studied speech †, of which, with hesitation and trembling he pronounced some words; but still more perplexed, whilst he was struggling with his memory, and recollecting what he had to say, the soldiers who were nearest levelled their pikes at him, and killed him, looking upon him as guilty. His astonishment and silence they judged as a confession. For having had so much leisure to prepare himself in prison, they concluded that it was not his memory that failed him, but that his conscience hampered his tongue, and stopped his speech. This was very justly inferred. The place, the spectators, and the expectation, astonish him, even at the

* Horat. Epod. ode xiv. ver. 3. † Q. Curt. lib. vii. cap. 1.

time,

time, when it was incumbent on him to ſpeak the beſt he could. What can a man do, when his life is dependant on his oratory?

Even when he had learnt a ſpeech by heart:

For my part, the very being tied to what I am to ſay is enough to make me loſe hold of it. When I wholly commit and refer myſelf to my memory, I lay ſo much ſtreſs upon it, that it ſinks under me, and ſtartles at the burthen. So much as I truſt to it, ſo much do I put myſelf out of my own power, even ſo as to know what countenance to put on; and have been ſometimes very much put to it to conceal the ſlavery wherein I was ſhackled; when at the time my deſign was to manifeſt in ſpeaking a perfect negligence both of face and accent, and to ſhew caſual and unpremeditated motions, as riſing from preſent occaſions; chuſing rather to ſay nothing to the purpoſe, than to ſhew that I came prepared to ſpeak well; a thing eſpecially unbecoming a man of my profeſſion, and a thing of too great obligation upon him that cannot retain much; the preparation is far ſhort of producing the expected effect. A man oft ſtrips himſelf to his doublet to leap no further than he would have done in his gown. *Nihil eſt his qui placere volunt, tam adverſarium, quam expectatio* *; "nothing is ſo mor-"tifying to thoſe who are deſirous to pleaſe, as raiſing "an expectation of them before-hand." It is recorded of the orator Curio †, that when he propoſed the diviſion of his oration into three or four parts, it often happened, either that he forgot ſome one, or added one or two more. I have always avoided falling into this inconvenience, out of a hatred to theſe promiſes and preſcriptions, not only from a diſtruſt of my memory, but alſo becauſe this method reliſhes too much of the artiſt. *Simpliciora militares decent.* It is enough that in the mind I am in at preſent, I will never more take upon me to ſpeak in a place of reſpect; for as to ſpeaking, when a man reads his ſpeech, beſides that it is very abſurd, it is a mighty diſadvantage to thoſe who naturally could give

* Cic. Acad. lib. iv. cap. 4.
† Cicero in lib. de claris Oratoribus, cap. 60.

it

it a grace by action; and much less will I throw myself upon the mercy of my present invention; it is heavy and perplext, and such as would never furnish me in sudden and important necessities.

He is ready enough to make additions to his book, but not corrections.

Permit, reader, this Essay its course also, and this third sitting to finish the rest of my picture, I add, but I correct not; first, because I conceive, that a man having once made a transfer of his labours to the world, has no farther right to them; let him do better if he can in some new undertaking, but not adulterate what he has already sold; of such dealers nothing should be bought till after they are dead: let them well consider what they do, before they produce them to the light. Who hastens them? My book is always the same, saving that upon every new edition, (that the buyer may not go away quite empty handed) I take the liberty to add as it were by an ill jointed inlaying, some few supernumerary things. They are no other but over-weight, that do not disfigure the primitive form of those Essays, but by a little ambitious subtility, give a kind of particular repute to every one that follows. From thence however there will easily happen some transposition of chronology; my stories taking place according to their fitness, and not always according to the age. Secondly, because that for what concerns myself, I fear to lose by the change: my understanding does not always go forward, it goes backward too. I do not much less suspect my fancies for being the second or third, than for being the first, either present, or past; we oft correct ourselves as foolishly as we do others. I am grown older by a great many years since my first publications, which were in the year 1580: but I very much doubt whether I am grown an inch the wiser. I now, and I anon, are two several persons; but whether the better, now or anon, I am not able to determine. It were a fine thing to be old, if we only travelled towards improvement; but it is a drunken, stumbling, reeling, ill-favoured motion, like that of reeds, which the air casually waves to and fro as it lists.

Antiochus

Antiochus had in his youth written ſtrenuouſly in favour of the Academy *; but in his old age he wrote as much againſt it: which of theſe two ſoever I ſhould follow, would not he be ſtill Antiochus? After having eſtabliſhed the incertainty, to go about to eſtabliſh the certainty of human opinions, was it not to eſtabliſh doubt, and not certainty, and to promiſe, that had he yet another age to live, he would be always upon terms of altering his judgment, not ſo much for the better, as for ſomething elſe? The public favour has given me a little more confidence than I expected; but what I moſt fear, is, leſt I ſhould glut the world with my writings: I had rather of the two ſpur my reader than tire him: as a learned man of my time has done. Praiſe is always pleaſing, let it come from whom, or upon what account it will; yet ought a man to underſtand why he is commended, that he may be ſelf-conſiſtent. The vulgar and common eſteem is ſeldom right; and I am miſtaken, if amongſt the writings of my time, the worſt are not thoſe which have moſt gained the popular applauſe. For my part, I return my thanks to thoſe good-natured men, who are pleaſed to take my weak endeavours in good part. The faults of the workmanſhip are no where ſo apparent, as in a matter which of itſelf has no recommendation. Blame me not, reader, for thoſe that ſlip in here, by the fancy or inadvertency of others; every hand, every artizan, contribute their own materials. I neither concern myſelf with orthography (and only direct if after the old way) nor pointing, being very inexpert both in the one and the other. Where they wholly break the ſenſe, I am very little concerned, for they at leaſt diſcharge me; but where they ſubſtitute a falſe one, as they ſo often do, and wreſt me to their conception, they ruin me. When the ſentence nevertheleſs is not ſtrong enough in proportion to my poor ability, a civil perſon ought to reject it

The writings of Antiochus corrected by himſelf in his more mature age.

Orthography and pointing deſpiſed.

* Cicer. Acad. Quæſt. lib. iv. cap. 22.

as

as none of mine. Whoever knows how lazy I am, and how indulgent to my own humour, will eaſily believe that I had rather write as many more Eſſays, than be tied to reviſe theſe for ſo puerile a correction.

Montaigne very much expoſed at his own houſe to the inſults of his neighbours during the civil wars.

I was ſaying elſewhere, that being planted in the deepeſt mine of this new metal, i. e. the very center of this new religion, I am not only deprived of any great familiarity with men of other kind of manners than my own, and of other opinions, by which they hold together, as by a tie that ſuperſedes all other obligations; but I even do not live without danger, amongſt men to whom all things are equally lawful, and of whom the moſt part cannot offend the laws more than they have already done; from whence the greateſt degree of licentiouſneſs does proceed. All the particular circumſtances reſpecting me being conſidered, I do not find one man of my country, who pays ſo dear for the defence of our laws both in coſt and damages (to uſe the phraſe of the lawyers) as myſelf. And ſome there are who brag of their ardor and zeal, that if things were juſtly weighed, do much leſs than I. My houſe, as one that has ever ever been free to all comers, and at the ſervice of all, (for I could never be induced to make a garriſon of it, which is moſt deſired when the war is fartheſt off) has ſufficiently merited the popular regard, ſo that it would be a hard matter to inſult over me upon my own dung-hill; and I look upon it as a wonderful and exemplary thing, that it yet continues a virgin free from blood and plunder during ſo long a ſtorm, and ſo many revolutions and tumults in the neighbourhood. For to confeſs the truth, it had been poſſible enough, for a man of my complexion, to have quitted any one conſtant and continued form whatever. But the invaſions and incurſions, alterations and viſſicitudes of fortune round about me, have hitherto more exaſperated than mollified the humour of the country, and involve me in freſh difficulties and dangers that are invincible.

I eſcape

I escape, it is true, but am troubled that it is more by chance, and something of my own prudence, than by justice, and am not satisfied to be out of the protection of the laws, and under any other safe-guard than theirs. As matters stand, I live above one half by the favour of others, which is an untoward obligation. I do not like to owe my safety either to the generosity or affection of great persons, who concur in my legality and liberty, or to the obliging manners of my predecessors, or my own. For what if I was another kind of man? If my deportment, and the frankness of my conversation oblige my neighbours or relations, it is cruel that they should acquit themselves of that obligation, in only permitting me to live; and that they should say, "we allow him "the free liberty of having divine service read in his "own private chapel, all the churches round about be-"ing destroyed, and grant him the use of his goods, "and the fruition of his life, as one that protects our "wives and cattle in time of need." For my house has for many descents shared in the reputation of Lycurgus, the Athenian, who was the general trustee and treasurer of his fellow-citizens*. Now I am clearly of opinion, that a man should live by his own right and authority, and not either by recompence or favour. How many gallant men have rather chose to lose life, than to owe it? I hate to subject myself to any sort of obligation, but above all, to the dues of honour. I think nothing so expensive to me as what is given me, and that because my will lies at pawn under the title of gratitude, and more willingly accept of offices that are to be sold; being really of opinion, that for the last I give nothing but money, but for the other I give myself.

How disagreeable this sort of dependancy was to him.

Lycurgus the general trustee for all his fellow-citizens.

The tie that holds me by the laws of courtesy, binds me, I think, more than that of legal constraint; and I am much more at ease when bound by a scrivener,

The obligations of probity, as well as promises, to be strictly observed.

* Plutarch, in the Lives of the ten Orators, of whom Lycurgus was the seventh, chap. 1.

than

than by myself. Is it not reason that my conscience should be much more engaged when men simply rely upon it? In a bond, my faith owes nothing because it has nothing lent it. Let them trust to the faith and security they have taken, which is not mine; I had much rather break the wall of a prison, and the laws themselves, than my probity and word: I am nice, even to superstition, in keeping my promises, and therefore upon all occasions have a care to make them uncertain and conditional. To those of no great moment, I add the jealousy of my own rule to make it weight; it racks and oppresses me with its own interest. Even in actions that are wholly my own, and free, if I once say it, I conceive that I have bound myself, and that delivering it to the knowledge of another, I have positively enjoined it to my own performance. Methinks I promise it, if I but say it, and therefore am not apt to say much of that kind. The sentence that I pass upon myself is sharper and more severe than that of a judge, who only considers it in the light of a common obligation; but my conscience looks upon it with a more severe and penetrating eye. I lag in those duties to which I should be compelled if I did not go. *Hoc ipsum ita justum est quod recte fit, si est voluntarium* *; "even that which is well done, is only just, when it "is voluntary." If the action has not some splendor of liberty, it has neither grace nor honour.

Quod me jus cogit, vix voluntate impetrent †.

That which the laws have power to constrain,
They from my will would hardly e'er obtain.

Where necessity draws me, I love to let my will take its own course. *Quia quicquid imperio cogitur, exigenti magis quam præstanti acceptum refertur*; "for whatever is

* Cicero de Offic. lib. i. cap. 9.
† Ter. Adel. act iii. scene 5. ver. 44. of Dacier's edit.

"com-

"compelled by power, is more aſcribed to him that "exacts, than to him that performs it." I know ſome who follow this rule, even to injuſtice, who will ſooner give than reſtore, ſooner lend than pay, and will do thoſe the leaſt good to whom they are moſt obliged. I am of a quite contrary humour.

He ſo much hated to be obligated that he thought it an advantage to be diſengaged from his attachment to perſons by their ingratitude.

I ſo much love to diſengage and releaſe myſelf, that I have ſometimes looked upon the ingratitude, affronts, and indignities which I have received from thoſe, to whom either by nature or accident I was bound in ſome duty of friendſhip, as an advantage to me, taking this occaſion of their ill-uſage for an acquittance and diſcharge of ſo much of my debt. And though I ſtill continue to pay them all the apparent offices of common civility, I notwithſtanding find myſelf very ſparing of doing that upon the account of juſtice, which I did upon the ſcore of affection, and am a little eaſed of my former attention and ſolicitude by my inward will. *Eſt prudentis ſuſtinere ut curſum, ſic impetum benevolentiæ* *; "it is the part of a wiſe man "to keep as tight a curb upon the heat of his friend-"ſhip, as upon the fury of his horſe;" my friendſhip being too urging and preſſing where I take, at leaſt, for a man who loves not to be importuned. And this huſbanding my friendſhip ſerves me for a ſort of conſolation in the imperfections of thoſe with whom I am concerned. I am ſorry they are the leſs to be valued for it, but ſo it is, that I alſo diminiſh in my application and engagement towards them. I approve of a man that is the leſs fond of his child for having a ſcald-head or being crooked, and not only when he is ill-natured, but alſo when he is unhappy and baſe-born, (for God himſelf has made abatement from his value and natural eſtimation) provided he carry himſelf in this coldneſs of affection with moderation and exact juſtice. Proximity leſſens not defects with me, but rather makes them greater.

* Cicero de Amicitia, cap. 17.

Why he is for dispensing with his acknowledgements even towards princes.

After all, according to what I understand in the science of benefits and acknowledgement (which is a subtle science, and of great use) I know no person whatever more free and less indebted than I am at this hour. What I do owe, is simply to common and natural obligations; as to any thing else, no man is more absolutely clear.

——— *nec sunt mihi nota potentum*
Munera *. ———

Nor did I e'er take gifts from men in pow'r.

Princes give me enough, if they take nothing from me; and do me good enough, if they do me no harm: that is all I ask of them. Oh, how am I obliged to Almighty God, who has been pleased that I should receive all I have, immediately from his bounty, and particularly reserved all my obligation to himself! How earnestly do I beg of his divine mercy, that I may never owe real thanks to any one! O happy liberty wherein I have hitherto lived! May it continue with me to the last. I endeavour to have no absolute need of any one. *In me omnis spes est mihi* †; "all my "hope is in myself." This is what every one may be able to place in himself, but more easily they whom God has sheltered from natural and urgent necessities. It is a wretched and dangerous thing to depend upon another. Ourselves, on whom is our most just and safest dependance, are not sufficiently assured. I have nothing mine but myself, and yet the possession is in part defective and borrowed. I fortify myself both in courage, which is the strongest assistant ‡, and also in fortune,

* Virg. Æn. lib. xii. ver. 519. † Ter. Adelph. act iii. sc. 5. ver. 9.
‡ In the fourth edition of 1588, when this third volume was first published, Montaigne only says, "I cultivate and enlarge myself with all the care I "can, that I may have wherewithal to satisfy me when I am by all "abandoned.

tune, therein to satisfy myself, though every thing else should forsake me. Eleus Hippias * not only furnished himself with science, that he might at need chearfully retire from all other company to enjoy the Muses, nor with the knowledge of philosophy only to teach his soul to be contented with it, and bravely to subsist without external conveniencies, when fate would have it so; he was, besides, so curious as to learn cookery, to shave himself, to make his own cloaths, his own shoes and drawers, and, as far as posible to rely upon himself, and to shift without the assistance of others. A man more freely and chearfully enjoys borrowed conveniencies, when it is not an enjoyment forced and constrained by neneffity, and when a man has in his own will and fortune wherewith to live without them. I know myself very well. But I can hardly expect to meet with such pure generosity, such free and frank hospitality from any person, as would not appear to me unhandsome, tyrannical, and tainted with reproach, if neceffity had reduced me to it. As giving is an ambitious quality and prerogative, so is accepting a quality of submission. Witness the injurious and quarrelsome refusal that Bajazet

"abandoned." It is my opinion that it would have been best if he had stopped there; because "for a man to arm himself with courage so as to "be contented though he should be on all sides abandoned," is the greatest effort that man is capable of. Nor is this point attainable but by practice, which whoever has once arrived to, he has nothing more to do but to persist in it, in order to be sheltered from the insults of fortune. Now to add after this "to fortify himself in fortune," &c. is reducing the first thought to nothing, or making a distinction where in fact there is none. This criticism does not appear to me to be too refined; if it be, I consent that it may not have a place in any future edition of Montaigne's essays.

* Eleus Hippias made his boast at the Olympic games, that there was nothing in any art of which he was ignorant, not only of the liberal arts, as geomtry, music, literature, and poetry, together with natural philosophy, ethics and politics, but that he made with his own hand the ring and the very cloaths he wore, &c. as above. Cicero de Oratore, lib. iii. cap. 32. If at the time here mentioned there had been public places in Greece, where men of the first rank had spent the prime of life in splendor, in gaming, or in doing nothing, poor Hippias, instead of gaining applause at the Olympic Games would have been hissed out of the theatre.

made of the presents that Themir sent him: and those that were offered in the behalf of the emperor Solyman to the emperor of Calicut, were so much disdained by him, that he not only rudely rejected them; saying, that neither henor any of his predecessors had ever been wont to take, and that it was their office to give; but moreover caused the ambassadors sent for that purpose to be put into a dungeon. When Thetis, says Aristotle, flatters Jupiter, when the Lacedæmonians flatter the Athenians, they never put them in mind of the good they have done them, which is always odious, but of the benefits they have received from them; they who I see so familiarly employ every one in their affairs, and thrust themselves into so much obligation, would never do it, did they but relish the sweetness of pure liberty as I do, and did they but weigh, as wise men should, the burthen of an obligation. It is sometimes perhaps returned, but it is never dissolved; this is a miserable slavery to a man that loves to be at full liberty upon all accounts. My acquaintance, both better and meaner men than myself, are able to say whether they have ever known a man less importuning, soliciting, entreating, and less burdensome to others than I have been. And in this, it is no great wonder, if I am not to be paralleled, since so many parts of my manners contribute to it; as a little natural pride, an impatience of being refused, the contraction of my desires and designs, an incapacity for all kind of business, and my most beloved qualities, idleness, and freedom; from all these together I have conceived a mortal hatred to being obliged to or by any other than myself. I leave no stone unturned, rather than employ the beneficence of another in any slight or important occasion or necessity whatever. My friends strangely importune me, when they advise me to call in a third person; and I think it as painful to disengage him who is indebted to me, by making use of him, as it is to engage myself to him that owes me nothing: these conditions being removed, provided they require of me nothing of any great trouble or care, (for I have

I have declared mortal war againſt all care) I am eaſily intreated, and ready to do ſervice to every one that needs it. Yet I have, I confeſs, more avoided receiving than ſought occaſions of giving; and, according to Ariſtotle, it is much more eaſy. My fortune has allowed me but little to do others good with, and the little it can afford is put into a pretty cloſe hand. Had I been born a perſon of rank, I would have been ambitious to have made myſelf beloved, not to make myſelf feared or admired; ſhall I more vainly expreſs it? I would have been as proud to pleaſe as to do good. Cyrus very wiſely, and, by the mouth of a great captain, and better philoſopher, prefers his bounty and benefits much before his valour and warlike conqueſts. And the elder Scipio, wherever he would raiſe his eſteem, ſets a higher value upon his affability and humanity, than his proweſs and victories, and has always this glorious ſaying in the mouth, "that "he has given his enemies as much cauſe to love him, "as his friends." I will ſay then, that if a man muſt of neceſſity owe ſomething, it ought to be by a more lawful claim than that whereof I am ſpeaking, to the neceſſity I am engaged in by this miſerable war; and not by ſo great a debt as that of my total preſervation; a debt that overwhelms me. I have a thouſand times gone to bed at my own houſe with an apprehenſion that I ſhould be betrayed and murdered that very night, compounding with fortune, that it might be without terror, and with quick diſpatch; and after my Pater-noſter have cried out,

Impius hæc tam culta novalia miles habebit *?

Shall impious ſoldier have theſe new-plow'd lands?

What remedy? it is the place of my birth, and moſt of my anceſtors have here fixed their affection and name; we harden ourſelves to whatever we are accuſtomed.

* Virg. Eclog. i. ver. 71.

And in so miserable a condition as ours is, custom is a great bounty of nature, which takes off the acuteness of many evils that we suffer. A civil war has this with it worse than other wars have, to make us all stand centry in our own houses.

Quam miserum, portâ vitam muroque tueri,
Vixque suæ tutum viribus esse domus *!*

To one's own walls and gates 'tis wretched sure
To trust one's life, yet scarce to be secure.

It is a grievous extremity for a man to be straitened for room, and to be disturbed in his own house. The country where I live is always the first that takes up arms, and the last that lays them down, and which never enjoys an entire calm.

Tum quoque cum pax est, trepidant formidine belli †.

In time of peace, they quake for fear of war.

——quoties pacem fortuna lacessit;
Hac iter est bellis; melius, fortuna, dedisset
Orbe sub Eoo sedem, gelidaque sub Arcto,
Errantesque domos ‡.

Oh ill built city, too, too near the Gaul!
Oh sadly situated place! when all
The world hath peace, this is the scene of war,
And first that is invaded: happier far
Might we have liv'd in farthest North or East,
Or wand'ring tents of Scythia, than possest
The edge of Italy.

* Ovid. Trist. lib. iv. eleg. 1. ver. 69. † Ovid. Trist. lib. iii. eleg. 10. ver. 67. ‡ Lucan. lib. i. ver. 255. 256.---251. 252. 253.

My

My careleſſneſs and indolence ſometimes fortify me againſt theſe conſiderations, and they alſo in ſome meaſure lead us on to reſolution. I oft imagine and expect mortal dangers with a kind of delight *. I ſtupidly plunge myſelf head-long into death, without conſidering or taking a view of it, as into a dark and deep vortex, which ſwallows me up in a trice, and ſmothers me in an inſtant by a profound ſleep, without any ſenſe of pain, or care. And in theſe ſhort and violent deaths, the conſequence that I forſee adminiſters more conſolation to me than the effects do fear. They ſay, that as life is not better for being long, ſo death is better for not being long. I do not ſo much avoid the thoughts of death as I enter into confidence with it. I wrap and ſhrowd my ſelf in the ſtorm that is to blind and hurry me away with a ſudden and inſenſible attack. Moreover, if it ſhould fall out, (as ſome gardeners ſay of roſes and violets, that they are more odoriferous by growing near garlick and onions, by reaſon that the laſt ſuck and imbibe what bad ſmell there is in the ſoil,) that theſe depraved natures ſhould alſo attract all the malignity of my air and climate, and render me ſo much better and purer by their vicinity, that I ſhould not loſe all; that is not ſo; but there may be ſomething in this, that goodneſs is

* To comprehend the author's true meaning here, the words muſt be conſidered with regard to their neceſſary connection with what goes before. Montaigne repreſents himſelf as ſurrounded in his houſe by a gang of banditti, who are authoriſed by war to commit all manner of crimes with impunity. In ſuch a ſituation wherein he is always in danger of having his throat cut, and in a mortal dread of ſeeing himſelf every moment at the mercy of thoſe villains, he one while fancies himſelf actually in their hands, and feeling a kind of pleaſure to be at laſt delivered thereby on a ſudden from the continual anguiſh which rendered his life inſupportable. Full of theſe ideas he ſtupidly plunges himſelf headlong, as he ſays above, into death, without taking a view of it, as into a dark and deep vortex, which ſwallows him up, &c. Which is as much as to ſay, that by taking his reſolution he expects when he leaſt thinks of it, to be in that ſtate of ſurprize and horror from the barbarity of thoſe villains who ſhall come to knock him on the head, or cut his throat before he has time to look about him. The images which Montaigne here makes uſe of are lively but innocent, and very natural, and ſuch as no judicious fair critic will, I believe, ever find fault with.

more beautiful and attractive when it is rare, and that contrariety and diverſity binds and ſhuts up well-doing within itſelf, and inflames it by the jealouſy of oppoſition and by vain-glory. Thieves and robbers (of their ſpecial favour) have no particular ſpite at me; no more have I to them: If I had, I would have my hands too full. Conſciences of the ſame caſt are lodged under ſeveral ſorts of robes, like cruelty, treachery, and rapine; and ſo much the worſe as they are the more miſchievous, and the more ſecure, and the darker by being concealed under the colour of the laws. I do not ſo much hate a profeſſed injury, as one that is treacherous; an enemy in arms, as an enemy in a gown. Our fever has ſeized upon a body that is not much the worſe for it. There was fire before, and now it is broke out into a flame. The noiſe is greater, the evil much the ſame. I uſually anſwer ſuch as aſk me the reaſon of my travels, "that I know very well "what I fly from, but not what I ſeek." If they tell me that there may be as little health amongſt ſtrangers, and their manners are no purer than ours; I firſt reply, that this is a hard caſe.

Tam multæ ſcelerum facies *,

Where crimes in many ſhapes abound.

Secondly, that it is always an advantage to change an ill condition for one that is uncertain, and that the ills of others ought not to afflict us ſo much as our own.

The commendation of Paris.

I will not here omit, that I never rail ſo much againſt France, as to be out of humour with Paris; that city has ever had my heart from my infancy; and it has fallen out to me, as of excellent things, that the more of other fine cities I have ſeen ſince, the more the beauty of this gains upon my affection. I love it for its own ſake, and more in its

* Virg. Georg. lib. i. ver. 506.

own

own native being, than the addition of foreign pomp; I love it tenderly, even with all its warts and blemiſhes. I am not a Frenchman but by this great city, great in people, great in the felicity of her ſituation; but above all, great and incomparable in variety and diverſity of commodities; the glory of France, and one of the moſt noble ornaments of the world. May God of his goodneſs drive our diviſions far from it. While it remains entire and united, I think it ſafe from all other violence. I give it caution, that of all the parties, that will be the worſt that ſhall ſet it at variance; I have no fears for her, but for her own ſake; and certainly I have as much fear for her as for any other city in the kingdom. Whilſt ſhe continues, I ſhall never want a retreat where I may be ſafe, ſufficient to make me amends for parting with any other retreat whatever.

Montaigne conſidered all nations as his countrymen.

It is not becauſe Socrates had ſaid ſo, but becauſe it is in truth my own humour, and perhaps too much ſo. I look upon all men as my countrymen, and embrace a Polander as heartily as a Frenchman, preferring the univerſal and common tie, to this national tie. I am not much taken with the ſweetneſs of a native air: acquaintance wholly new, and wholly my own, appear to me full as good as the other common and accidental ones with our neighbours. Friendſhips that are purely of our own acquiring, ordinarily ſurpaſs thoſe to which we are joined by the communication of the clime or of blood. Nature has placed us in the world free and unbound; we confine ourſelves to certain limits, like the kings of Perſia, who obliged themſelves to drink no other water but that of the river Choaſpes, fooliſhly quit claim to their right of uſage in all other ſtreams; and as far as concerned themſelves, dried up all the other rivers of the world. What Socrates did towards the end, to look upon a ſentence of baniſhment, as worſe than a ſentence of death againſt him, I ſhall, I think, never be ſuch an old fool, or ſo ſtrictly bigotted to my own country, as to be of

that opinion. Such celeſtial lives as his have many ideas, which I embrace more by eſteem than affection; and they have ſome alſo ſo elevated and extraordinary, that I cannot embrace them ſo much as by eſteem, becauſe I cannot conceive them. This humour was very effeminate in a man that thought the whole world his city. It is true, that he diſdained travel, and had hardly ever ſet his foot out of the Attic territories. What ſay you to his grudging the money his friends offered to ſave his life, and his refuſal to come out of priſon by the mediation of others, becauſe he would not diſobey the laws, at a time when they were otherwiſe ſo much corrupted? Theſe examples are of the firſt rate for me; of the ſecond there are others that I could find out in this ſame perſon. Many of theſe rare examples ſurpaſs the force of my action; nay ſome of them likewiſe ſurpaſs the force of my judgment.

The advantages which Montaigne reaped by travel.

Theſe reaſons ſet aſide, travel is in my opinion a profitable exerciſe; the ſoul is therein continually employed in obſerving things new and unknown. And I do not know, as I have often ſaid, a better ſchool wherein to form life, than by inceſſantly expoſing to it the diverſity of ſo many other lives, fancies, and uſages; and to make it reliſh ſo perpetual a variety of the forms of human nature. The body is therein neither idle nor overwrought, and this moderate motion puts it in breath. I can keep on horſeback, as much tormented with the ſtone as I am, without alighting or being weary, for eight or ten hours together.

Vires ultra ſortemque ſenectæ *.

Beyond the ſtrength and common lot of age.

No weather hurts me, but by the parching heat of a ſcorching ſun; for the umbrellas made uſe of in Italy,

* Virg. Æneid. lib. vi. ver. 114.

ever

ever since the time of the ancient Romans, are a greater burthen to the arm than a relief to the head. I would fain know where was the industry of the Persians so long ago, and in the infancy of their luxury, to make such ventilators, and plant such shades about their abodes, as Xenophon reports they did. I love rain, and to dabble in the dirt, like the ducks; the change of air and climate never concern me: every sky is alike to me. I am only troubled with inward ailments, which I breed within myself, and those are not so frequent in travel. I am hard to be got out, but when once upon the road, I hold out as well as the best. I take as much pains in little, as in great undertakings; and to equip myself, for a short journey, if but to visit a neighbour, as for a long one. I have learned to travel after the Spanish fashion, and to make but one stage of tolerable length; and in excessive heats, I always travel by night, from sun-set to sun-rising. The other method of baiting by the way, in haste and hurry to gobble up a dinner, is, especially in short days, very inconvenient. My horses thereby perform the better, for never any horse tired under me, that was able to hold out the first day's journey: I water them at every brook I meet, and only take care they have so much way to go before I come to my inn, as will digest the water in their bellies. My being so loth to rise in a morning, gives my servants leisure to dine at their ease before they set out. For my own part, I never eat too late; my appetite comes to me in eating, and not else, and am never hungry but at table.

Unjustly blamed for travelling when old and married.

Some of my friends blame me for continuing this travelling humour, being married and old. But they are in the wrong; for it is the best time for a man to leave his family, when he has put it into a way of subsisting without him, and continuing as he left it. It is indeed much greater imprudence to abandon it to a less faithful housekeeper, and one who will be less solicitous to look after your affairs.

The

The most useful and the most honourable accomplishment of a mother of a family.

The most useful and honourable knowledge and employment for the mother of a family, is the management of household affairs. I see some that are covetous indeed, but very few that are saving. It is the supreme quality of a woman, and what the man ought to seek after before any other, as the only dowry that tends to ruin or to preserve our families. Let men say what they will, according to the experience I have learned, I require in married women the œconomical virtue above all other virtues; I put my wife to it, as a concern of her own, leaving her by my absence the whole government of my affairs. I am ashamed to see, in several families, the master of which has been bustling about all morning, I am sorry to see him return at noon quite jaded and ruffled to find his madam just got out of her bed, and dressing herself at the toilet. This is for queens to do, it would be improper even in them. It is ridiculous, and unjust, that the laziness of our wives should be maintained with our own sweat and labour. No man, as far as I can, shall have a clearer and a more quiet and free enjoyment of his estate than I. If the husband furnish matter, nature herself requires that the wife find the form.

The conjugal friendship grows warm by absence.

As to the duties of conjugal friendship, which some think to be cooled by this absence, I am not of that opinion; it is on the contrary an intelligence that easily cools and is hurt by a too close and constant attendance. Every strange woman appears graceful, and every one finds by experience, that being continually together is not so pleasing, as to part for a time, and meet again. These interruptions give me a fresh gust to enjoy my family, and render my own house more pleasant to me. Change of place warms my appetite, now to one then to the other. I know that the arms of friendship are long enough to reach and join hands from the one end of the world to the other, especially, when there is a continual communication of offices that rouse the obligation

and

and remembrance of it. The Stoics say, that there is so great a connection and relation amongst wise men, that he who dines in France, feeds his companion in Egypt; and that whoever but holds out his finger, in what part of the world soever, all the wise men upon the habitable earth feel themselves assisted by it. Fruition and possession principally appertain to the imagination; and this more fervently and constantly embraces what it is in quest of, than what we have hold of. Let a man but consider his daily amusements, and he will find, that he is most absent from his friend when in his company. His presence releases your attention, and gives your thoughts liberty to absent themselves at every turn, for every occasion. When I am at Rome, I keep and govern my house, and the conveniencies I there left, see my walls rise, my trees shoot, and my revenue increase, or decrease, very near as well as when I am there.

Ante oculos errat domus, errat forma locorum *.

Still fondly I behold with fancy's eye,
My house, and places that around it lie.

If we enjoy nothing but what we touch, we may say farewel to the money in our closets, and to our sons when they are gone a hunting. We will have them nearer to us. Is the garden, or half a day's journey from home so far? What is ten leagues, far or near? If near, what is eleven, twelve, or thirteen? and so on by degrees. In earnest, if there be a woman who can tell her husband what step ends the near, and what step begins the remote, I would advise her to stop between the two.

——— *excludat jurgia finis.*

Some certain point should finish the debate.

Utor permisso, caudæque pilos ut equinæ
Paulatim vello: et demo unum, demo etiam unum
Dum cadat elusus ratione ruentis acervi †.

* Ovid. Trist. lib. iii. eleg. 4. † Horat. lib. ii. ep. i. ver. 38, 45.

I take

I take the grant, and by degrees prevail;
Thus hair by hair, I pluck the horſe's tail,
And while I take them one by one away
The numbers to a nought at laſt decay.

Let them in God's name call philoſophy to their aſſiſtance; in whoſe teeth it may be caſt, that ſince it neither diſcerns the one nor the other end of the joint betwixt the too much and the little, the long and the ſhort, the light and the heavy, the near and the remote; and ſince it diſcovers neither the beginning nor the end, it muſt needs judge very uncertainly of the middle. *Rerum natura nullam nobis dedit cognitionem finium* *; "nature "has not given us any knowledge of the end of things." Are they not ſtill wives and friends to the dead, who are not only at the end of this, but in the other world? We include thoſe who have been, and thoſe who are not yet, much more the abſent. We did not promiſe in marriage to be continually brooding and twining together, like ſome little animals that we ſee, or tied like thoſe of Karanti †, that were ſo bewitched in the conjunctive mood that they clung together ever after like the canine race. And a wife ought not ſo greedily to fix her eyes on her huſband's fore-parts, that ſhe cannot endure to ſee him turn his back, if occaſion be. But may not this ſaying of that excellent painter of women's humours be here introduced, to ſhew the reaſons of their complaints?

* Cicer. Acad. lib. iv. cap. 29. † It is Saxo Grammaticus that has left us the ſtory of theſe bagridden creatures, in the 14th book of his Hiſtory of Denmark; where, ſpeaking of the converſion of the people of Rugen, an iſland in the Baltic; he ſays, that the inhabitans of Karanti, or Kerantia, one of their towns, after having renounced their worſhip of idols, were nevertheleſs ſtill afraid of their power, remembering how often they had been puniſhed for their lewdneſs, when both ſexes were tied together in the action after the manner of dogs, and even faſter. Sometimes when they were taken in the fact they were, for the diverſion of the people, hoiſted upon a perch, the man on one ſide, and the woman on the other, without being able to ſeparate. If this fact was true, one could hardly help inferring, that the devil was at that time much more ſevere or more miſchievous than he is now.

Uxor,

Uxor, ſi ceſſes, aut te amare cogitat,
Aut tete amari, aut potare, aut animo obſequi.
Et tibi bene eſſe ſoli, cum ſibi ſit male †.

Thy wife, if thou ſtay'ſt long abroad, is mov'd,
Thinking thou either lov'ſt, or art belov'd;
Drinking, or ſomething elſe, thyſelf to pleaſe,
And that thou'rt well, whilſt ſhe is ill at eaſe.

Or may it not be, that of itſelf oppoſition and contradiction entertains and nouriſhes them, and that they ſufficiently accommodate themſelves, provided they incommode you?

The aim of true friendſhip.

In true friendſhip, wherein I am expert, I give myſelf more to my friend, than I attract him to me. I am not only better pleaſed in doing him ſervice, than if he did me one; but, likewiſe, had rather he would do himſelf good than me, and he moſt ſerves me when he does ſo. And if abſence be either pleaſant or convenient for him, it is more acceptable to me than his preſence; neither is it properly abſence, when there are means of correſponding. I have ſometimes made good uſe of our ſeparation. We better filled, and further extended the poſſeſſion of life in being parted. He lived, rejoiced, and ſaw for me, and I for him, as plainly as if he had himſelf been there; one part remained idle, and we confounded one another when we were together. The diſtance of place rendered the conjunction of our wills more rich. This inſatiable deſire of perſonal preſence, implies ſome weakneſs in the fruition of ſouls.

The utility of the abſence of a friend.

Whether old age ought to hinder us from travelling.

As for old age, which is alledged againſt me, it is for youth on the contrary to ſubject itſelf to the common opinions, and to curb itſelf for the ſake of others. It was wherewith to pleaſe both the people

† Ter. Adel. act i. ſcene 1. ver. 7, &c.

and

and itself; we have but too much ado to please ourselves alone. As natural conveniencies fail us, let us support ourselves with those that are artificial. It is injustice to excuse youth for pursuing its pleasures, and to forbid old men to seek them. When young, I concealed my wanton passions with prudence; now I am old, I get rid of melancholy ones by a debauch *. Sure it is that the Platonic laws forbad travel till forty or fifty years old, that it might be more ufeful and inftructive at so mature an age. I would sooner subscribe to this other second article of the same laws, which forbids it after threescore; for at such an age you will never return from a long journey. What care I for that? I undertake it neither to return nor to finish it. I do it only to keep myself in motion whilst motion pleases me, and only walk for the walk's sake. They who hunt after a benefice, or a hare, run not; they only run who run at prison-base, and to exercise their running. My design is divisible throughout, it is not grounded upon any great hopes; every day concludes my expectation. The journey of my life is carried on after the same manner; and yet I have seen places enough far off, where I could have wished to have been detained. And why not, if Chrysippus, Cleanthes, Diogenes, Zeno, Antipater, so many sages of the soureft sect †, chearfully abandoned their country, without occasion to complain of it, and only for the enjoyment of

* If that be, as I really think, Montaigne's sentiment, the word *debauch* must be taken in a moderate sense, and such as is suitable to Montaigne's genius and character, and to the subject he here treats of, that is to say, to his passion for travel, which he is pleased to term a debauch, by an excursion which is very common to him. There is scarce any writer who has more need than Montaigne of a judicious reader, and one especially that is fair and candid. His style, which abounds with bold expressions and figures, is very likely to deceive a cavelling censor, or to give a handle to those ill-natured critics who, without regard to truth, boldly censure the most innocent expressions, when they think they can represent them to other persons in a criminal light.

† Chrysippus was of Soles, Cleanthes of Assos, Diogenes of Babylon, Zeno of Citium in the isle of Cyprus, Antipater of Tarsus, all Stoic philosophers, who passed their lives at Athens, as Plutarch has observed in his Treatise of banishment, chap. 12.

another air? In earneſt, that which moſt diſpleaſes me in all my travels, is, that I cannot reſolve to ſettle my abode where I beſt like, but that I muſt always propoſe to myſelf to return, to accommodate myſelf to the common humours.

As indifferent as it was to Montaigne where he died, he preferred to die abroad rather than at home; and why?

If I feared to die in any other place than that of my birth; if I thought I ſhould die more uneaſily remote from my own family, I would hardly go out of France; I would not without fear ſtep out of my pariſh; for I feel death always twitching me by the throat, or by the back: but I am of another temper, death is in all places alike to me; yet might I have my choice, I think I would rather chooſe to die on horſeback than in bed, out of my own houſe, and far enough from my own people. There is more heart-breaking than conſolation in taking leave of one's friends; I am willing to omit this act of civility; for, of all the offices of friendſhip, that is the only one that is unpleaſant; and I could with all my heart forget to bid this great and eternal farewel. If there be any convenience in ſo many ſtanders-by, it produces an hundred inconveniencies. I have ſeen many miſerably dying, ſurrounded with all this train: it is a crowd that choaks them. It is againſt duty, and a teſtimony of little kindneſs, and little care, to permit you to die in quiet; one torments your eyes, another afflicts your ears, another tires your faultring tongue; you have neither ſenſe nor limb that is not battered and bruiſed by them: your heart melts with pity to hear the lamentation of thoſe that are your real friends, and perhaps with vexation, to hear the bewailings of others that are feigned and counterfeit. Whoever has been delicate in his taſte, when well, is much more ſo in his weakneſs. In ſuch a neceſſity a gentle hand is required, and ſuitable to his ſentiments, to ſcratch him juſt in the place where he itches, or not to meddle with him at all. As we ſtood in need of a knowing woman † to bring us into the world, we

† Viz. a midwife, called in French *ſage femme*.

have

have much more need of a wiſer man to help us out of it. Such a one, and a friend to boot, a man ought to purchaſe at any rate for ſuch an occaſion. I am not yet arrived at ſuch a pitch of bravery and ſelf-ſufficiency, as to diſdain all aſſiſtance, or defy all trouble in that hour. I endeavour to hide myſelf, and to make my exit by ſtealth, not through fear, but by art. I do not intend in this act of dying to give proof, and make a ſhew of my conſtancy. For whom ſhould I do it? All the right and title I have to reputation will then ceaſe. I content myſelf with a death collected within itſelf, quiet, ſolitary, and all my own, ſuitable to my retired and private life. Quite contrary to the Roman ſuperſtition, where a man was looked upon as unhappy, who died without ſpeaking, and that had not his neareſt relations to cloſe his eyes. I have enough to do to comfort myſelf, without the trouble of conſoling others; too many thoughts in my head, to need that circumſtances ſhould poſſeſs me with new; and matter enough to entertain myſelf without borrowing. This critical minute is out of the ſhare of ſociety; it is the act of one ſingle perſon. Let us live, and be merry amongſt our friends, let us go among ſtrangers to repine and die. A man may find thoſe for his money that will ſhift his pillow, and rub his feet, and trouble him no more than he would have them; who will preſent him with an indifferent countenance, and ſuffer him to govern himſelf, and to complain according to his own method. I wean myſelf daily by my reaſon from this childiſh and inhumane humour, of deſiring by our ſufferings to move the compaſſion and mourning of our friends. We ſtretch our inconveniencies beyond their juſt extent when we extract tears from them, and the conſtancy in which we commend every one who ſupports his own adverſe fortune, we accuſe and reproach in our friends when the caſe is our own; we are not ſatisfied that they be only ſenſible of our condition, unleſs they be alſo afflicted. A man ſhould extend his joy, but, as much as he can, contract his

The eyes of dying perſons cloſed by their neareſt relations.

grief: he that makes himself lamented without reason, is a man not to be lamented when there shall be real cause. To be always complaining, is the way never to be lamented; and he who too often calls for pity, is never commiserated by any. He that feigns himself dying when he is alive, is subject to be thought likely to live when he is dying. I have seen some, who have taken it in dudgeon when they have been told that they looked well, and that their pulse was regular, who refrained laughter, because it betrayed a recovery, and hated health, because it was not to be lamented: and, which is much worse, they were not women neither. I describe my infirmities, but such as they really are, at most, and avoid all ominous expressions and formal exclamations. If not mirth, at least a sedate countenance in the standers-by, is proper in the presence of a wise sick man. He does not quarrel with health, for seeing himself in a contrary condition. He is pleased to contemplate it sound and entire in others, and to enjoy it at least for company. He does not, because he feels himself melt away, abandon all thoughts of life, nor avoid common conversation. I am inclinable to study sickness whilst I am well; when it has seized me it will make its impression real enough, without the help of my imagination. We prepare ourselves before-hand for the journey we undertake and resolve upon; we leave the appointment of the hour when to take horse, to the company, and in their favour defer it. I find this unexpected advantage in the publication of my manners, that it in some sort serves me for a rule. I have sometimes some consideration of not betraying the history of my life. This public declaration obliges me to keep on my way, and not to give the lye to the image I have drawn of my qualities, commonly less deformed and contradicted than the malignity and infirmity of the judgments of this age would have them. The uniformity and simplicity of my manners produce a face of easy interpretation, but because the fashion is a little new, and unaccustomed, it gives great opportunity to slander. Yet so it is, that whoever will go about justly to injure me, I do think I

Mourning very improper about sick persons.

so assist his malice by my known and avowed imperfections, that he may that way glut his ill-nature, without skirmishing with the wind. If I myself, to prevent the accusation and discovery, confess enough to make his satire toothless, as he conceives, he is welcome to make use of his right of amplification, and extension; (offence has its rights beyond justice;) and let him make the roots of those vices I have laid open to him shoot up into trees: let him make his use, not only of those I am really infected with, but also of those that only threaten me; injurious vices both in quality and number. Let him cudgel me that way. I would willingly follow the example of the philosopher Bion *. Antigonus being about to reproach him with the meanness of his birth, he presently cut him short, with this declaration †, "I am," said he, "the son of a slave, a butcher, and stigmatized, "and of a whore my father married in the lowest of "his fortune, who both of them were chastized for some "misdemeanour. An orator bought me, when a child, "and finding me a pretty and a forward boy, bred me "up, and when he died left me all his estate, which I have "brought into this city of Athens, and here settled myself "to the study of philosophy." Let the historians never trouble themselves with inquiring after me. I shall tell them what I am; a free and generous confession enervates reproach, and disarms slander. So it is, that all things considered, I fancy men as oft commend, as undervalue me beyond reason. And methinks also, from my infancy, they have given me a place, in rank and degree of honour, rather above than below my right. I would find myself more at ease in a country where these degrees were either regulated or not regarded. Amongst men, when the difference about the precedency either of walking or sitting exceeds three replies, it is reputed uncivil. I never stick at giving, or taking place out of rule, to avoid the trouble of ceremony. And never denied pre-

* Not Dion, as it is in all the editions of Montaigne, as well as Mr. Cotton's translation. † Diogenes Laertius, in the life of Bion, lib. iv. sect. 46.

cedency

cedency to any man who affected it. Besides this profit I reap from writing of myself, I have also hoped for this other advantage, that if it fall out that my humour please, or jump with that of some honest man, before I die, he would then desire, and seek to be acquainted with me. I have given him a great deal of space; for all that he could have in many years acquired by a long acquaintance and familiarity, he has seen in three days in this register, and more surely and exactly set down. A pleasant fancy: many things that I would not confess to any one in particular, I deliver to the public; and refer my best friends to a bookseller's shop, to know what are my most secret attainments and thoughts.

Excutienda damus præcordia *.

Fain would the muse lay open to thy test,
Each latent thought, each winding of my breast.

Had I by such plain tokens known where to have sought for any one proper for my conversation, I would certainly have gone a great way to find him: For the sweetness of suitable and agreeable company, cannot, in my opinion, be bought too dear. Oh! What a rare thing is a friend! How true is that old saying, "that the use of a friend is more pleasing and necessary than the elements of water and fire!" To return to my subject; there is then no great harm in dying privately, and far from home. And we think it a duty to retire for natural actions not so disagreeable nor terrible as this. But besides such as are reduced to spin out a long languishing life, ought not perhaps to wish to encumber a great family with their continual miseries. Therefore the Indians, in a certain province, thought it just to dispatch a man, when reduced to such a necessity: and in another of their provinces they

How useful and necessary a friend is.

* Pers. sat. v. ver. 22.

all forſook him, to ſhift for himſelf as well as he could. To whom do they not at leaſt become irkſome, tedious, and inſupportable? You teach your beſt friends to be cruel in ſpite of them; hardening women and children by long uſage, neither to lament, nor to regard your ſufferings. The groans extorted from me by the ſtone, are not now regarded by any-body. And though we ſhould extract ſome pleaſure from their converſation, (which does not always happen, by reaſon of the diſparity of conditions, which eaſily begets contempt or envy toward any one whatever) is it not too much to be troubleſome all the days of a man's life? The more I ſhould ſee them ſtrain out of real affection to be ſerviceable to me, the more I ſhould be ſorry for their pains. We are allowed to lean, but not to lay our whole weight upon others, ſo as to prop ourſelves by their ruin. Like him who cauſed little children's throats to be cut, to make uſe of their blood for the cure of a certain diſeaſe he had: or that other, who was continually ſupplied with tender young girls, to keep his old limbs warm in the night, and to mix the ſweetneſs of theirs with his ſour and ſtinking breath. Decrepit old age is a ſolitary quality. I am ſociable even to exceſs; yet I think it reaſonable that I ſhould now withdraw my ailments from the ſight of the world, and keep them to myſelf. Let me ſhrink and draw up myſelf like a tortoiſe. I learn to viſit men without hanging upon them; I would endanger them in ſo ſteep a paſſage. It is now time to turn my back to company.

Montaigne's preparations with a view to death.

But in theſe travels you may be ſurpriſed with ſickneſs in ſome wretched cot or hovel, where nothing can be had to relieve you: I always carry moſt things neceſſary with me; and beſides, we cannot evade fortune, or eſcape fate, if it once reſolve to attack us. I need nothing extraordinary when I am ſick. I will not be beholden to my bolus to do that for me which nature cannot. At the very beginning of my fevers, and ſickneſſes that caſt me down, whilſt I am yet entire, and but little diſordered

ordered in my health; I reconcile myself to God by the last christian offices, and find myself by so doing more free and easy, and have got methinks so much the better of my disease. I have still less need of a scrivener or counsellor, than of a physician. What I have not settled of my affairs when I was in health, let no one expect I will do when I am sick. Death is what I am ever prepared for. I durst not so much as defer it one day. And if nothing be done, it is as much as to say, either that doubt delayed my choice, (and sometimes it is well chosen not to choose) or that I was positively resolved not to do any thing at all. I write my book for few men, and for few years. Had it been a matter of duration, it should have been put into a more durable language; for according to the continual variation that ours has to this day been subject to, who can expect that the present style should be in use fifty years hence? It slips every day through our fingers, and since I was born is altered one half. We say that it is now perfect; and every age says the same of the language then spoken: but I shall hardly trust to that, so long as it varies and changes as it does *. It is for good and useful writings to rivet it to them, and its reputation will rise or fall with the fortune of our state. For which reason, I am not afraid to insert in it several private articles, which will spend their use amongst the men that are now living, and that concern the particular knowledge of some who will see further into them than every common reader. I will not after all, as I oft hear dead men's memories worried, that men should say of me, "he judged and lived so and so; he would have done

* There are in Montaigne so many solid thoughts, and so agreeably expressed, paintings so just, lively, and natural, that his book will be read and regarded as long as the French language shall last, how different soever be the turn of it from what it had in his time; which, though it be already so different, the Essays have lost nothing of their former credit with men of a good taste, who love study, and to make an advantage of the discoveries to which they are naturally led by such study. This will be an inexhaustible scource, from which they will always draw with pleasure.

"this or that, could he have ſpoken when he was dying, "he would have ſaid ſo or ſo, and have given this thing "or the other: I knew him better than any." Now, as much as decency permits, I here diſcover my inclinations and affections; but I do it more willingly and freely by word of mouth, to any one who deſires to be informed. So it is, that in theſe memoirs, if any obſerve, he will find, that I have either told, or deſigned to tell all. What I cannot expreſs, I point out with my finger.

Verum animo ſatis hæc veſtigia parva ſagaci
Sunt, per quæ poſſis cognoſcere cætera tute *.

But by theſe foot-ſteps a ſagacious mind
May certainly all other matters find.

I leave nothing to be deſired, or to be gueſſed at concerning me. If people muſt be talking of me, I would have it to be juſtly and truly. I would come again with all my heart from the other world, to give any one the lye that ſhould report me other than I was, though he did it to honour me. I perceive that people repreſent, even living men, quite another thing than what they really are: and had I not ſtoutly defended a friend, whom I have loſt, they would have repreſented him to me in a thouſand contrary ſhapes.

What kind of Death reliſhed beſt.

To conclude the account of my frail humours, I do confeſs, that in my travel, I ſeldom come to my quarters, but it runs in my mind whether I could like to be ſick, and die there; I wiſh to be lodged in ſome private part of the houſe, remote from all noiſe, and naſtineſs, not ſmoaky, nor cloſe. I aim to ſooth death by theſe frivolous circumſtances; or to ſay better, to diſcharge myſelf from all other incumbrances, that I may have nothing to do, but to wait for an event which will be enough to weigh me

* Lucret. lib. i. ver. 403.

down

down without any other load. I would have my death ſhare with my life in eaſe and convenience; it is a great lump of it, and of importance, and hope it will not now contradict what is paſt. Death has ſome forms that are more eaſy than others, and aſſumes divers qualities, according to every one's fancy. Amongſt the natural deaths, thoſe that proceed from weakneſs and a ſtupor, I think the moſt favourable: amongſt thoſe that are violent, I dread a precipice worſe than the fall of ruins, that would cruſh me in a moment; and think worſe to be killed by a ſword than to be ſhot: I would rather have choſen to poiſon myſelf with Socrates, than ſtab myſelf with Cato. And though it be the ſame thing, yet my imagination makes as wide a difference as betwixt death and life, to throw myſelf into a fiery furnace, or plunge into the channel of a ſmooth river: ſo idly does our fear more concern itſelf for the means than the effect. It is but a moment, it is true, but a moment of ſuch weight, that I would willingly give many days of my life to ſhoot the gulf after my own way. Since every one's imagination renders it more or leſs terrible, and ſince every one has ſome choice amongſt the ſeveral forms of dying, let us try a little further, to find ſome one that is wholly clear from all irkſomeneſs. Might not one render it even pleaſant, as they did * who were companions in death with Anthony and Cleopatra? I ſet aſide the ſevere and exemplary efforts produced by philoſophy and religion. But amongſt men of low rank, ſuch as a Petronius †, and a Tigillinus at Rome ‡, there have been found men condemned to diſpatch themſelves, who have as it were lulled death aſleep with the delicacy of their preparations; they have made it ſlip and ſteal away, even in the height of their accuſtomed diverſions, amongſt whores and good fellows. There is not a word of conſolation, no mention of making a will, no ambitious affectation of conſtancy, no talk of their future ſtate, amongſt ſports, feaſts, wit,

* Plutarch, in the life of Mark Anthony, chap. 15. † Tacit. Annal. lib. xvi. cap. 19. ‡ Tacit. Hiſt. lib. i. cap. 72.

and mirth, table-talk, music, and amorous verses. Is it not possible for us to imitate this resolution after a more decent manner? Since there are deaths that are fit for fools, and fit for the wise, let us find out such as are fit for those who are betwixt both. My imagination suggests to me one that is easy, and since we must die, one that is also to be desired. The Roman tyrants thought they did in a manner give a criminal life, when they gave him the choice of his death. But was not Theophrastus, that philosopher, so delicate, so modest, and so wise, compelled by reason, when he durst repeat this verse translated by Cicero?

The manner of dying left to the choice of criminals by the tyrants.

Vitam regit fortuna, non sapientia †.

Fortune, not wisdom, governs human life.

Fortune is assisting to the facility of the progress of my life; having placed it in such a condition, that for the future it can be no advantage nor hindrance to me. It is a condition that I would have accepted at any stage of my life: but now that I am packing up my baggage, and marching off, I am particularly pleased, that in dying I shall neither have them merry, nor sorry; she has so ordered it by a cunning compensation, that they who may pretend to any considerable advantage by my death, will at the same time sustain a material inconvenience. Death sometimes is more grievous to us, in that it is grievous to others, and interests us in their interest as much as in our own, and sometimes more.

His method of travelling.

In this conveniency of quarters which I desire, I am for nothing pompous and sumptuous, I hate it rather; but am for a certain plain neatness, which is often found in places where there is less of art, and which nature has adorned with some grace that is altogether her own. *Non ampliter, sed munditer convivium; plus salis quam sumptus* *: "I

† Cic. Tusc. lib. v. cap. 9.

* Corn. Nepos, in vita Pompon. Attic. cap. 13.

"love

"love a feaſt that is elegant rather than abundant, in "which there is more ſavour than ſuperfluity." As for thoſe whoſe affairs compel them to travel in the winter-ſeaſon through the Griſons country, they muſt expect to be reduced to extremity upon the road. I, who for the moſt part travel for my pleaſure, do not order my affairs ſo ill. If the way be foul on my right-hand, I turn on my left; if I find myſelf unfit to ride, I ſtay where I am: and really when I do ſo, I ſee nothing that is not as pleaſant and commodious as my own houſe. It is true, that I always think ſuperfluity ſuperfluous, and obſerve a kind of trouble even in delicacy and abundance. Have I left any thing behind me unſeen, I go back to ſee it; I am never out of my way. I trace no certain line, either ſtraight or crooked. If I do not find in the place to which I go what was reported to me, as it oft falls out that the judgments of others do not jump with mine, and that I have found them for the moſt part wrong; I never complain of loſing my labour: I have at leaſt informed myſelf that what they told me was not there. I have a conſtitution of body as free, and a palate as indifferent as any man living.

He accommodated himſelf to the different manners and cuſtoms of the ſeveral countries he ſaw.

The different faſhions of ſeveral nations no further concern me than the mere pleaſure of variety. Every uſage has its reaſon. Be the plate and diſhes pewter, wood, or earth, my meat boiled or roaſted, let them give me butter or oil, nuts, or olives, hot, or cold, it is all one to me: and it is ſo indifferent, that growing old, I accuſe this generous faculty, and have need that delicacy and choice ſhould correct the indiſcretion of my appetite, and ſometimes relieve my ſtomach. When I have been abroad out of France, and the people in civility have aſked me, if I would be ſerved after the French manner, I laughed at the queſtion, and always frequented tables the moſt filled with ſtrangers. I am aſhamed to ſee my countrymen beſotted with this fooliſh humour of quarrelling with

forms

forms contrary to their own. They seem to be out of their element, when out of their own village. Wherever they go, they keep strictly to their own fashions, and abominate those of foreigners. If they meet with one of their own country in Hungary; they hail the happy day. They renew their acquaintance; they cling together, and rail at the barbarous manners they see there. And why not barbarous, since they are not French? And those are reckoned to have made the best use of their travels, who rail most at what they have seen; and indeed most of them return no wiser than they went. In their travels very close and reserved, with a silent and incommunicable prudence, preserving themselves from the contagion of an unknown air. What I am saying of them, puts me in mind of something like it, which I have sometimes observed in some of our young courtiers, who will not mix with any but those of their own class; and look upon us as men of another world, with disdain or pity. Put them upon any discourse but the intrigues of the court, and they are utterly at a loss; as very blockheads and novices to us, as we are to them. And it is truly said, that a well-bred man is of a compound education. I, on the contrary, travel very much sated with our own fashions; not to look for Gascons in Sicily, I have left enough of them at home: I rather seek for Greeks and Persians; they are the men I want to be acquainted with, and the men I study; it is with them that I bestow and employ myself: and, which is more, I fancy that I have met but with few customs that are not as good as our own. I have not, I confess, travelled very far; scarce out of the sight of the fanes of my own house!

He seldom joined company upon the road.

As to the rest, most of the accidental company a man falls into upon the road, give him more trouble than pleasure; I wave them as much as I civilly can, especially now that age seems in some sort to privilege and sequester me from the common forms. You suffer for others, or others suffer for you; both of them inconveniencies of im-

importance enough, but the latter appears to me the greater.

Worthy men a great relief in travel.

It is a rare fortune but of ineſtimable ſolace, to have a worthy man, one of a ſound judgment, and of a temper conformable to your own, who takes a delight to bear you company. I have been at a very great loſs for one in all my travels. But ſuch a companion ſhould be choſen, and taken with you from your firſt ſetting out. There can be no pleaſure to me without communication: there is not ſo much as a ſpritely thought comes into my mind, which it does not grieve me to have produced alone, without one to communicate it to. *Si cum hac exceptione detur ſapientia, ut illam incluſam teneam, nec enunciem, rejiciam* *; "if wiſdom were conferred with "this condition, that I muſt keep it to myſelf, and not "communicate it to others, I would refuſe it." This other has ſtrained it one note higher: *Si contigerit ea vita ſapienti, ut omnium rerum affluentibus copiis, quamvis omnia, quæ cognitione digna ſunt, ſummo otio ſecum ipſe conſideret, & contempletur, tamen ſi ſolitudo tanta ſit, ut hominem videre non poſſit, excedat è vita* †: "if ſuch a "condition of life ſhould happen to a wiſe man, that in "the greateſt plenty of all conveniencies, he might at "the moſt undiſturbed leiſure, conſider, and contem-"plate all things worth the knowing, yet if his ſolitude "muſt be ſuch that he muſt not ſee a man, he had "much better quit life ‡." I approve of Architas's opinion, when he ſaid, that it would be unpleaſant, even in heaven itſelf, to ſurvey the glory of thoſe great and divine celeſtial bodies without a companion. But yet it is much better to be alone, than in fooliſh and troubleſome company. Ariſtippus loved to live as a ſtranger in all places:

Mea ſi fata meis paterentur ducere vitam
Auſpiciis ‖.

* Seneca, epiſt. 6. † Cicero de Offic. lib. i. cap. 43.
‡ Cicero de Amicitia, cap. 23. ‖ Æneid. lib. iv. ver. 340.

But

But if the fates would ſo propitious be,
To let me live at my own liberty;

I ſhould chuſe to paſs away the greateſt part of my life on horſeback;

——— viſere geſtiens,
Qua parte debacchentur ignes
Qua nebulæ pluviique rores *.

To view the ſtores of ſnow and hail,
And where exceſſive heats prevail.

Arguments for diverting Montaigne's paſſion for travel.

"But it may be aſked, have you not "more eaſy diverſions at home? What "do you there want? Is not your houſe "ſituated in a ſweet and healthful air, "ſufficiently furniſhed, and more than ſufficiently large? "The royal majeſty has more than once been entertained there with all his pomp. Are there not more "below your family in good government, than there "are above it in eminence? Is there any local thought "which is extraordinary, and indigeſtible, that afflicts "you?

Quæ te nunc coquat, et vexet ſub pectora ſua †?

That now lies broiling in thy troubl'd breaſt,
And ne'er will ſuffer thee to be at reſt?

"Where do you think to live without moleſtation and "diſturbance? *Nunquam ſimpliciter fortuna indulget* ‡. "The favours of fortune are always mixed with ſome "gall." "You ſee then, it is only you that trouble

* Horat. lib. iii. ode iii. ver. 54, &c.
† Cic. de Senect. ex Enn.
‡ Curtius lib. iv. cap. 14.

"yourſelf,

" yourself, and that you every where follow yourself, " and every where complain; for there is no satisfaction " here below, but for souls that are either brutish or di- " vine. He, who in so just an occasion has no content- " ment, where will he think to find it? How many " millions of men would be content to be in such a con- " dition as yours? Do but reform yourself; for that is " wholly in your own power; whereas you have no other " right, but patience towards fortune. *Nulla placida* " *quies est, nisi quam ratio composuit* †;" " there is no " perfect tranquility but what is produced by reason."

The answer to those arguments.

I see the reason of this remonstrance, and I see it perfectly well; but it would have been more laconic, and more pertinent, to bid me in one word, be wise. This resolution is beyond wisdom, it is her work and product. Thus the physician lies preaching to a poor languishing patient to be chearful, but he would advise him a little more discreetly in bidding him be well. For my part, I am but a man of the common sort. It is a wholesome precept, certain, and easy to be understood, " be con- " tent with what you have," that is to say, with reason: and yet to follow this advice, is no more in the power of the wisest men than in mine. It is a common saying, but of a terrible extent: what does it not comprehend? All things fall under discretion and qualification. I know very well, that in the literal sense, this pleasure of travelling is a testimony of uneasiness and irresolution; therefore these two are our governing and predominant qualities. Yes, I confess they are; I see nothing, not so much as in a dream, and in a wish, whereon I could set up my rest: variety only, and the possession of diversity, can satisfy me, if any thing can. In travelling, it pleases me that I may stay where I like without inconvenience, and that I have wherewith commodiously to divert myself. I love a private life, because it is my own choice that I love it, not from any dislike of the

† Seneca, epist. 56.

public

public way of living, which perhaps is as much according to my complexion. I serve my prince by it more chearfully, because it is by the free reflection of my own judgment and reason, without any particular obligation; and that I am not compelled so to do, for being rejected or disliked by the other party; and so of all the rest. I hate the morsels that necessity carves for me. I should think that any convenience upon which I were only to depend, would stick in my throat:

Alter remus aquas, alter mihi radat arenas *

Let me in water plunge one oar,
And with the other rake the shore.

One cord will never hold me fast enough. You will say there is a vanity in such an amusement. But where is there not? And these fine precepts are vanity, and all wisdom is vanity. *Dominus novit cogitationes sapientium, quoniam vanæ sunt*; "the Lord knoweth the "thoughts of the wise that they are vain †." These exquisite subtilities are only fit for the pulpit. They are discourses that will send us all saddled into the other world. Life is a material and corporeal motion, an action imperfect and irregular of its own proper essence; I make it my business to serve it according as it is.

Quisque suos patimur manes ‡.

We all are punish'd for our proper crimes.

Sic est faciendum, ut contra naturam universam nihil contendamus; ea tamen conservata, propriam sequamur §: "we must so order it, as by no means to contend

* Prop. lib. iii. eleg. 3. ver. 23. † Psalm xciv. ver 11. 1 Corinth. iii. ver. 20. ‡ Æneid. vi. ver. 743. § Cicero de Offic. lib. i. cap. 31.

"against

" againſt univerſal nature; but yet, that rule being " obſerved, to conform to our own." To what end are theſe ſublime points of philoſophy, upon which no human being can ſettle, and thoſe rules that exceed both our uſe and force.

Philoſophical remonſtrances as much deſpiſed by the author of them as by the perſon to whom they are made.

I often ſee that we have ideas of life ſet before us, which neither the propoſer, nor thoſe that hear him, have any manner of hope, nor which is more, of inclination, to follow. Of the ſame ſheet of paper whereon the judge has but juſt writ a ſentence againſt an adulterer, he ſteals a piece whereon to write a love-letter to his companion's wife. She with whom you had but juſt now an illicit commerce, will preſently, even in your own hearing, exclaim more loudly againſt the ſame fault in her companion, than a Portia. And ſuch there are, who will condemn men to death for crimes that they do not themſelves repute ſo much as faults. I have in my youth ſeen a gentleman with one hand preſent the people with verſes that excelled both in wit and licentiouſneſs, and with the other, at the ſame time, the moſt rigid theological tenets that the world has been teazed with theſe many years. Men proceed at this rate; we let the laws and precepts take their courſe, ourſelves keep another; not only by debauchery of manners, but often by judgment and contrary opinion. Do but hear a philoſophical lecture; the invention, eloquence, and pertinency immediately ſtrike your mind, and move you; there is nothing that either pricks or ſtings your conſcience; it is not to it that they addreſs. Is not this true? This made Ariſto ſay, that neither a bath nor a lecture ſignified any thing, unleſs they ſcowred and made men clean *. One may ſtop at the outward ſkin; but it is after the marrow is picked out: as after having quaſt off the good liquor in a fine bowl, we conſider the graving and workmanſhip. In all the ſchools of ancient philoſophy this is

* Plutarch, in his Treatiſe of Hearing, chap. 8.

to

to be found, that the same philosophy-reader there publishes the rules of temperance, and at the same time reads lectures of love and wantonness. Xenophon, even in the bosom of Clinias, writ against the Aristippic virtue. It is not that there is any miraculous conversion in it that makes them thus wavering, but it is as Solon represents himself, sometimes in his own person, and sometimes in that of a legislator. One while he speaks for the crowd, and another for himself: taking the free and natural rules for his own share, assuring himself of entire health and vigour.

Curentur dubii medicis majoribus ægri *.

A desp'rate wound must skilful hands employ.

A wise man permitted to love.

Antisthenes allowed a wise man to be in love †, and do whatever he thought convenient, without regard to the laws; as being better advised than they, and having a greater knowledge of virtue ‡. His disciple Diogenes said, that men to perturbations were to oppose reason; to fortune, confidence; and to the laws, nature. For tender stomachs, forced and artificial recipes must be prescribed: strong stomachs serve themselves simply with the prescriptions of their own natural appetite. After this manner do our physicians proceed, who eat melons, and drink iced wines, whilst they confine their patients to syrup and panada. I know not, said the courtezan Lais, what they mean by their books, their wisdom, and philosophy, but those men knock as oft at my door as any other. In as much as our licentiousness always carries us beyond what is lawful and allowed, men have often stretched the precepts and rules of life beyond universal reason.

* Juven. sat. xiii. ver. 124.

† Diog. Laert. in the life of Antisthenes, lib. vi. sect. 11.

‡ Idem, in the life of Diogenes, lib. vi. sect. 38.

Nemo satis credit tantum delinquere quantum
Permittas *.

The wretched sinner always is in quest
Of crimes unpractis'd, pleasures unpossess'd.

It is to be wished, that there were more proportion betwixt the command and the obdience, and the mark seems to be unjust to which one cannot attain. There is no man so good, but if he measure all his thoughts and actions by the laws, he will find he has deserved hanging ten times in his life; and at the same time it might be great pity and very unjust to punish and ruin him.

——*Olle, quid ad te*
De cute quid faciat ille vel illa sua † ?

Ollus, what matters it to thee
What with their skin does he or she?

And such a one there may be, as has no way offended the laws, who nevertheless would not deserve the character of a virtuous man, and whom philosophy would justly condemn to be whipt; so unequal and perplexed is this relation. We are so far from being good men, according to the laws of God, that we cannot be so according to our own. Human wisdom could never yet arrive at the duties it had prescribed to itself; and could it arrive thereto, it would prescribe to itself others beyond it, to which it would ever aspire and pretend: so great an enemy to consistency is our human condition. Man enjoins himself to be necessarily in fault. He is not very discreet to cut out his own duty by the measure of any other being than his own. To whom does he prescribe that which he does not expect any one can perform? Is he unjust in not

* Juven. sat. 14. ver. 233. † Mart. lib. vii. ep. 9. ver. 1, 2.

doing what is impoſſible for him to do? The laws, by whoſe ſentence we are not able, condemn us for not being able.

Montaigne is obliged to more exactneſs than thoſe who ſo much preach up virtue, in the character he attempts to draw of himſelf.

At the worſt this diſagreeable liberty of preſenting themſelves two ſeveral ways, the actions after one manner, and the diſcourſes after another, may be allowed to thoſe who ſpeak of things; but it cannot be allowed to thoſe who ſpeak of themſelves, as I do. I muſt march my pen as I do my feet. The common life ought to have a relation to other lives. The virtue of Cato was vigorous beyond the reaſon of the age he lived in, and for a man who undertook to govern others; as being devoted to the public ſervice, this might be called juſtice, if not unjuſt, at leaſt vain, and out of ſeaſon. Even my own manners, which differ ſcarce an inch from thoſe that are current amongſt us, yet render me at my age a little rough and unſociable. I know not whether it be without reaſon that I am diſguſted with the company I frequent; but I know very well that it would be without reaſon, ſhould I complain of its being diſguſted with me, ſeeing I am ſo with it. The virtue that is aſſigned to the affairs of the world, is a virtue of many wavings, corners, and elbows, to join and adapt itſelf to human frailty; a virtue mixed and artificial; not ſtrait, clean, conſtant, nor purely innocent. Our annals to this very day reproach one of our kings for ſuffering himſelf ſimply to be carried away by the conſcientious perſuaſions of his confeſſor. Affairs of ſtate have bolder precepts.

exeat aulâ,
Qui vult eſſe pius.*

Let him who will be good from court retire.

* Lucan, lib. viii. ver. 493.

I have

He was unfit for the management of public buſineſs.

I have formerly tried to employ in the management of public affairs, opinions, and rules of living, as rude, new, unpoliſhed, or unpolluted, as either were born with me, or I was formed to from my education, and wherewith I ſerve my own turn, if not ſo commodiouſly, at leaſt as ſecurely, in my own particular concerns: but I have found a ſcholaſtic and novice virtue, fooliſh and dangerous. He that goes into a crowd, muſt now go one way, and then another, keep his elbows cloſe, retire, or advance, and quit the direct way, according to what he encounters; and muſt live not ſo much according to his own method, as that of others; not according to what he purpoſes to himſelf, but according to what is propoſed to him, according to the time, according to men, according to occaſions. Plato ſays, that whoever eſcapes unhurt from the world's handling, eſcapes by miracle: and he ſays likewiſe, that when he appoints his philoſopher to be the head of a government, he means not a corrupt one like that of Athens, and much leſs ſuch a one as this of ours, wherein wiſdom itſelf would be at a loſs. A good herb tranſplanted into a ſtrong ſoil very contrary to its own nature, much ſooner conforms itſelf to the ſoil, than it reforms the ſoil to it. I find, that if I were wholly to form myſelf to ſuch employments, I muſt undergo a great deal of change and new modelling. And though I could ſo far prevail upon myſelf, (and why might I not with time and diligence work ſuch a feat) I would not do it. By the little trial I have had of public employment, it has been ſo much diſguſt to me; I feel by times ſome temptations toward ambition riſing in my ſoul, but I obſtinately oppoſe them.

At tu, Catulle, obſtinatus obdura *.

But thou, Catullus, hold out to the laſt.

* Catul. epig. 9. ver. 19.

I am ſeldom called to it; and as ſeldom offer myſelf uncalled. Liberty and lazineſs, the qualities moſt predominant in me, are qualities diametrically contrary to public employment. We cannot diſtinguiſh the faculties of men. They have diviſions and limits hard and delicate to chooſe. To conclude from the diſcreet conduct of private life, a capacity for the management of public affairs, is to conclude wrong. A man may govern himſelf well, that cannot govern others ſo, and compoſe eſſays that could not work effects. One man may order a ſiege well, that cannot marſhal a battle, and another may ſpeak well in private, who would not be able to harangue a people, or a prince. Nay, it is perhaps rather a teſtimony in him who can do the one, that he cannot do the other, than otherwiſe. I find that elevated ſouls are not much more proper for low things, than mean ſouls are for high ones. Could it be imagined that Socrates would have adminiſtered occaſion of laughter to the Athenians at the expence of his own reputation, for having never been able to ſum up the votes of his tribe, to deliver it to the council? Doubtleſs, the veneration I have for the perfections of this great man, deſerves that his fortune ſhould furniſh ſo magnificent an example for the excuſe of my principal imperfections. Our ſufficiency is cut out into ſmall parcels, mine has no latitude, and is alſo very contemptible in number. Saturninus * ſaid, to thoſe who had conferred upon him the command in chief, "My fellow ſoldiers you have loſt "a good captain, to make him a bad general † of an army.

Virtue which is genuine and ſincere cannot be employed in the management of a corrupt ſtate.

Whoever boaſts, in ſo ſick a time as this, of employing true and ſincere virtue in the world's ſervice, either knows not what it is; opinions growing corrupt with manners, (and in truth to hear them deſcribe it, to hear how moſt of them boaſt of their deportment, and to ſee what rules the lay down;

* One of the thirty tyrants who roſe in the time of the emperor Galian. † Trebellii Pollionis triginta tyranni, p. 126. Hiſt. Auguſt.

in-

inſtead of painting virtue, they paint mere vice and injuſtice altogether, and repreſent them in this falſe light in the education of princes); or if he does know it, boaſts unjuſtly, and let him ſay what he will, does a thouſand things of which his own conſcience accuſes him. I would willingly take Seneca's word, of the experience he made of it upon the like occaſion, provided he would deal frankly with me. The moſt honourable mark of goodneſs in ſuch a neceſſity, is for a man freely to confeſs both his own fault, and thoſe of others; with the power of his virtue to ſtop his inclination towards evil, unwillingly to follow this bias, to hope better, and to deſire better. I perceive that in theſe diſmemberments and diviſions wherein we in France are involved, every one ſtrives to defend his cauſe; even the beſt of them with diſſimulation and lyes. He that would write roundly of the true ſtate of the quarrel, would write raſhly and viciouſly. What is the moſt juſt party, other than a member of a cankered and worm-eaten body? But of ſuch a body, the member that is leaſt affected, is ſaid to be ſound, and with good reaſon, as our qualities have no title but in compariſon. Civil innocency is meaſured according to times and places. I like to read in Xenophon ſuch a commendation of Ageſilaus; being intreated by a neighbouring prince with whom he formerly had war, to permit him to paſs through his country, he granted his requeſt, giving him free paſſage through the Peloponneſus; and not only did not impriſon or poiſon him, when he had him at his mercy, but courteouſly received him according to the obligation of his promiſe, without doing him the leaſt injury. To ſuch humours as thoſe, this was an act of no great luſtre; elſewhere, and in another age, the frankneſs and magnanimity of ſuch an action will be in high eſteem, our raſcally capets * would have laughed at it, ſo little

The ſtudents of Montague College in Paris.

does

* Theſe capets are properly the ſcholars of Montague-College at Paris. In 1480 John Standoncht of Mechlin, a doctor of the Sorbonne, ſettled a

does the Spartan innocence reſemble that of France. We are without virtuous men, but they are according to what we repute ſo. Whoever has his manners eſtabliſhed in a regularity above the ſtandard of the age he lives in, let him either wreſt and blunt his rules; or, which I would rather adviſe him to, let him retire, and not meddle with us at all. What would he get by it,

Egregium ſanctumque virum ſi cerno, bimembri
Hoc monſtrum puero, & miranti jam ſub aratro
Piſcibus inventis & fœtæ comparo mulæ *.

To me an honeſt man more monſter ſeems
Than nature ſhews ev'n when a woman teems
A child with two heads; than mule's foaling found,
Or wond'rous fiſhes plow'd out from the ground.

A man may regret that times are no better, but not fly from the preſent; we may wiſh for other magiſtrates, but, we muſt notwithſtanding obey thoſe we have; and perhaps it is more laudable to obey the bad than the good. So long as the image of the ancient and received laws of this monarchy ſhall ſhine in any corner of the kingdom, there will I pitch my tent. If they unfortunately happen

fund for maintaining in this college 84 ſcholars, in honour of the 12 apoſtles, and the 72 diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe ſcholars were called ſo from ſhort cloaks they wore, called Capes. And as they were treated very harſhly, both with regard to their table, and to their diſcipline, they were commonly ſuch low geniuſes, that the word Capette was made uſe of to ſignify a ſcholar of the moſt contemptible character, a fool, an impertinent. Montaigne by the term of raſcally Capets indends the bulk of his cotemporaries who would not have failed to ridicule the frank and generous ſpirit of Ageſilaus. In the ſame predicament may be placed thoſe Flemiſh hiſtorians, who having accuſed Charles V. of imprudence in relying on the good faith of Francis I. when his imperial majeſty paſſed through France in 1540, have thereby ſignified their opinion, that Francis was very weak in ſlipping ſo fair an opportunity of making himſelf maſter of his moſt formidable enemy. The whole of this note was furniſhed me by M. de la Monnoye.

* Juven. ſat. 13. ver. 64. &c.

tothwart and contradict one another, so as to produce two factions of doubtful and difficult choice, I shall most readily chuse to escape and shun the tempest. In the mean time nature, or the hazards of war may lend me a hand. Betwixt Cæsar and Pompey, I would frankly have declared myself; but amongst the three robbers * that came after, a man must have been necessitated either to hide himself or to have gone along with the current of the time; which I think lawful, when reason no longer rules.

Quo diversus abis †?

Whither dost thou wand'ring run?

The reason why Montaigne sometimes deviated from his subject as he does here.

This farrago is a little wide from my subject. I go out of the way, but it is rather from a wantonness than heedlessness. My fancies follow one another, but sometimes at a great distance; and look towards one another, but it is with an oblique glance. I have read a dialogue of Plato, of a motley and fanatic composition, beginning with the subject of love, and ending with that of rhetoric. They stick not at these variations, and with a marvellous grace let themselves be carried away at the pleasure of the wind; or at least seem as if they were. The titles of my chapters do not always comprehend the subject, they oft but denote it by some mark only, as those others, Andria, Eunuchus, or these, Sylla, Cicero, Torquatus. I love the poetic ramble, by leaps and skips; it is an art, as Plato says, light, nimble, and a little maddish. There are pieces in Plutarch, where he forgets his theme, where the proposition of his argument is only found by incidence; and stuft throughout with foreign matter. Do but observe his progress in the Dæmon of Socrates. Good God, how beautiful then are his variations and frolicksome sallies, and then most

* Octavius, Mark Anthony, and Lepidus. † Æneid. lib. v. ver. 156.

of all, when they ſeem to be fortuitous, and introduced for want of heed. It is the unattentive reader that loſes my ſubject, and not I; there will always be found ſome phraſe or other in a corner that is to the purpoſe, though it lie very cloſe. I ramble indiſcreetly and tumultuouſly, my ſtyle and my wit wander at the ſame rate; a little folly is tolerable in him that will not be guilty of too much, ſay the precepts, and much more the examples of our maſters. A thouſand poets flag and creep in the proſaic ſtyle, but the beſt old proſe, (and I ſtrow it here up and down indifferently for verſe) ſhines throughout, and has the luſtre, vigour, and boldneſs of poetry, not without ſome air of its frenzy; and certainly proſe ought to have the preheminence in ſpeaking. The poet, ſays Plato, when ſet upon the Muſe's tripod, pours out with fury whatever comes into his mouth, like the ſpout of a fountain, without conſidering and pauſing upon it; and things come from him of various colours, of a contrary ſubſtance, and with an uninterrupted torrent: and all the old theology, (as the learned inform us) as well as the firſt philoſophy, are poeſy. It is the original language of the gods; I mean, that the matter ſhould diſtinguiſh itſelf; it ſufficiently ſhews where it changes, where it concludes, where it begins, and where it rejoins, without interlacing it with words of connexion, introduced for the ſervice of dull or inattentive ears, and without commenting on myſelf. Who is there that had not rather not be read at all, than after a drowſy or curſory manner? *Nihil eſt tam utile, quod in tranſitu profit* †; "no "work can be profitable, when it is read curſorily." If to take a book in hand, were to learn it; if to look upon it, were to conſider it; and to run it ſlightly over, were to make it a man's own; I were then to blame to make myſelf altogether ſo ignorant as I ſay I am. Seeing I cannot fix the attention of my reader by the weight of what I write, *manco male*, "I am "much miſtaken," if I ſhould chance to do it by perplex-

† Seneca, epiſt. 2.

ing

ing him; nay, he will afterward repent that he ever amuſed himſelf with it: it is very true, but he will yet amuſe himſelf with it. Beſides, there are ſome humours in which intelligence produces diſdain: who will think better of me for their not underſtanding what I ſay, and will conclude the depth of my ſenſe by its obſcurity; which to ſpeak ſincerely, I mortally hate, and would avoid, if I knew how. Ariſtotle boaſts ſomewhere in his writings, that he affected it; vicious affectation. The frequent breaks in chapters that I choſe to make in the beginning of my book, I have ſince thought, broke and diſſolved the attention before it was raiſed, as making it diſdain to ſettle and recollect itſelf to ſo little; and upon that account I have made the reſt longer, ſuch as require propoſitions, and aſſigned leiſure. In ſuch an employment, to whom you will not give an hour, you give nothing; and do nothing for him, for whom you only do whilſt you are doing ſomething elſe. To which may be added, that I have perhaps ſome particular obligation to ſpeak only by halves, confuſedly and inconſiſtently. I am therefore diſpleaſed with this impertinent way of talking, theſe extravagant projects that trouble life, and thoſe opinions ſo refined, that though they have truth, I think it too dear bought, and too diſagreeable. On the contrary, I make it my buſineſs to bring vanity itſelf in repute, and folly too, if it bring me any pleaſure; and chuſe to follow my own natural inclinations, without bearing too ſtrict a hand upon them.

His particular liking to the city of Rome.

I have ſeen elſewhere palaces in rubbiſh, and ſtatues both of gods and men defaced, and yet there are men ſtill; all this is true, and yet for all that, I cannot ſo often review the ruins of that ſo great and powerful city, that I do not admire and reverence it. The care of the dead is recommended to us; beſides I have been bred up from my infancy with theſe people: I had knowledge of the affairs of Rome long before I knew thoſe of my own houſe. I knew the Capitol, and its platform, before I knew the Louvre; and the river

Meaning Rome.

Tiber,

Tiber, before the river Seine. The qualities and fortunes of Lucullus, Metellus, and Scipio, have ever run more in my head than those of any of my own countrymen. They are all dead, and so is my father as absolutely dead as they, and is removed as far from me and life in eighteen years, as they are in sixteen hundred; whose memory, friendship, and society, I nevertheless cherish and embrace with a perfect and lively union. Nay, my humour is to render myself more officious to the dead; they no longer help themselves, and therefore methinks the more require my assistance: it is there that gratitude appears in its true lustre. Benefits are not so generously placed where there is retrogradation and reflection. Arcesilaus * going to visit Cresibius who was sick, and finding him in a very poor condition, privately conveyed some money under his pillow; and, by concealing it from him, acquitted him moreover from the acknowledgment due to such a benefit. Such as have merited from me my friendship and gratitude, have never lost them by being no more; I have better and more carefully paid them, when they were gone, and ignorant of what I did. I speak most affectionately of my friends when it is no longer in their power to know it. I have had a hundred quarrels in defending of Pompey, and for the cause of Brutus. This acquaintance yet continues betwixt us. We have no other hold even of things present but by fancy. Finding myself of no use to this age, I throw myself back upon that other; and am so enamoured of it, that the free, just, and flourishing state of that ancient Rome (for I neither like it in its birth, nor in its old age) engross my affection to a degree of enthusiasm, and therefore I cannot so oft review the situation of their streets and houses, and those ruins as profound as the Antipodes, but they always amaze me. Is it by nature, or through error of fancy, that the sight of places which we know have been frequented and inhabited by persons whose memories are

Gratitude towards the dead.

* Diogenes Laert. in the life of Arcesilaus, lib. iv. § 37.

recom-

recommended in ſtory, does in ſome ſort, work more upon us than to hear a recital of their actions, or to read their writings? *Tanta vis admonitionis ineſt in locis; et id quidem in hac urbe infinitum: quacumque enim ingredimur, in aliquam hiſtoriam veſtigium ponimus* *: "ſo great "a power of admonition is there in places; and truly in "this city ſo infinite, that which way ſoever we go we "tread upon ſome hiſtory." It pleaſes me to conſider their face, port, and veſtments. I ſtill ruminate on thoſe great names, and make them ring in my ears. *Ego illos veneror, & tantis nominibus ſemper aſſurgo* †; "I reverence them, and riſe up in honour of names ſo "great." Of things that are in any meaſure great and admirable, I admire even the common parts. I could wiſh to ſee them talk, walk, and ſup. It were ingratitude to contemn the relics and images of ſo many worthy and valiant men as I have ſeen live and die, and who, by their example give us ſo many good inſtructions, if we knew how to follow them.

Rome the common and univerſal metropolis of the nations.

Beſides, this very Rome that we now ſee deſerves to be beloved; ſo long, and by ſo many titles a confederate with our crown; the only common and univerſal city. The ſovereign magiſtrate that commands there, is equally acknowledged elſewhere: it is the metropolitan city of all the Chriſtian nations. The Spaniſh and French are there at home. To be a prince of this eſtate, there needs no more but to be a prince of Chriſtendom. There is no place upon earth, that heaven has embraced with ſuch an influence and conſtancy of favour; its very ruins are glorious, and ſtately.

Laudandis precioſior ruinis ‡.

More glorious by her wond'rous ruins.

* Cic. de Fin. lib. v. cap. 2. † Seneca, epiſt. 64. ‡ Sidonius, Apol. carm. 27. entitled Narbo ad Conſentium, ver. 62.

She

She yet in her very ruins retains the marks and image of empire. *Ut palam fit uno in loco gaudentis opus esse naturæ*; "so that it is manifest that nature is in this one "place enamoured of her own work." Some would blame, and be angry at themselves for being tickled with so vain a pleasure. Our humours are never too vain that are pleasant. Whatever they are that always content a man of common understanding, I could not have the heart to accuse him.

In what sense Montaigne is obliged to fortune.

I am very much obliged to Fortune, in that to this very hour she has offered me no outrage beyond what I was able to bear. Is it not her way to let those live in quiet by whom she is not importuned?

Quanto quisque sibi plura negaverit,
A diis plura feret: nihil cupientium
Nudus castra peto: multa petentibus
Desunt multa *.

The more we to ourselves deny,
The more the bounteous gods supply,
The more indulgent heav'n bestows;
Far from the quarters of the great
Happy, tho' naked, I retreat
Who covet much, their want is great.

If she continue her favour, she will dismiss me very well satisfied.

——— *nihil supra*
Deos lacesso †.

Nor for more
Do I the gods implore.

* Hor. lib. iii. ode 16. ver. 21.

† Hor. lib. ii. ode 18. ver. 11, 12.

But

But beware a ſhock. There are a thouſand that periſh in the port. I am very eaſy as to what ſhall here happen when I ſhall be gone. Preſent things take up enough of my thoughts.

Fortunæ cætera mando.

I leave the reſt to Fortune.

He did not think himſelf a whit the more unhappy for having no children to bear his name.

Beſides, I have not that ſtrong obligation, that which is ſaid to attach men to futurity by the iſſue that ſucceeds to their name and honour; and perhaps I ought the leſs to covet them, if they are to be ſo much deſired. I am of myſelf but too much tied to the world, and to this life. I am content to be in Fortune's power by circumſtances properly neceſſary to my being, without otherwiſe extending her juriſdiction over me; and never thought, that to be without children was a defect that ought to render life leſs contented. The want of iſſue has its conveniences too. Children are of the number of things that are not very much to be deſired, eſpecially now, when it would be ſo hard to make them good. *Bona jam nec naſci licet, ita corrupta ſunt ſemina* *; "nor can any thing good ſpring from ſeed ſo cor-"rupt." And yet they are juſtly to be lamented by ſuch as have loſt them.

Children not much to be coveted, and why.

His houſhold affairs not the worſe for being in his hands.

He who left me my houſe in charge prognoſticated that I would ruin it, conſidering my rambling humour: but he was miſtaken, for I am in the ſame condition now as when I firſt entered into it, or rather better; and yet without office, or any place of profit.

* Tertul. de pudicit.

As

He received no substantial favours from Fortune but such only as were windy and titular.

As to the rest, if Fortune has never done me any violent or extraordinary injury, neither has she favoured me. Whatever our family derives from her bounty, was there above an hundred years before my time. I have, as to my own particular, no essential and solid good, that I stand indebted for to her liberality; she has indeed done me some airy honours, and titulary favours that are not substantial; and those in truth she has not granted, but offered me, who, God knows, am all material, and like nothing but what is real and solid. And who, if I durst confess so much, would not think avarice much less excusable than ambition; nor pain less to be avoided than shame; nor health less to be coveted than learning, or riches than nobility.

Amongst her empty favours there is none that so much pleases the silly humour natural to my country, as an authentic bull of a Roman burgess, that was granted me when I was last there, embellished with pompous seals and gilt letters; and granted in the most bountiful manner. And because it is couched in a mixt style, more or less favourable, and that I could have been glad to have seen the copy of it before it had passed the seal, I will, to satisfy any one that may be sick of the same curiosity I was, transcribe it here in its true form.

A bull investing Montaigne with the freedom of the city of Rome.

Quod Horatius Maximus, Martius Cecius, Alexander Mutus, almæ urbis conservatores, de illustrissimo viro, Michaele Montano, equite Sancti Michaelis, & à cubiculo Regis Christianissimi Romana civitate donando, ad Senatum retulerunt, S. P. Q. R. de ea re ita fieri censuit.

CUM veteri more & instituto cupide illi semper studioseque suscepti sint, qui virtute ac nobilitate præstantes, magno reip. nostræ usui atque ornamento fuissent, vel esse aliquando possent: nos majorum nostrorum exemplo, atque auctoritate per-

permoti, præclaram hanc consuetudinem nobis imitandam, ac servandam fore censemus. Quamobrem cum illustrissimus Michael Montanus eques Sancti Michaelis, & à cubiculo Regis Christianissimi, Romani nominis studiosissimus, & familiæ laude, atque splendore, & propriis virtutum meritis dignissimus sit, qui summo senatus populique Romani judicio ac studio in Romanam civitatem adscisçatur; placere senatui P. Q. R. illustrissimum Michaelem Montanum rebus omnibus ornatissimum, atque huic inclyto populo charissimum, ipsum posterosque in Romanam civitatem adscribi, ornarique omnibus & præmiis & honoribus, quibus illi fruuntur, qui cives patritiique Romani nati, aut jure optimo facti sunt. In quo censere senatum P. Q. R. se non tam illi jus civitatis largiri, quam debitum tribuere, neque magis beneficium dare quam ab ipso accipere, qui hoc civitatis munere accipiendo, singulari civitatem ipsam ornamento, atque honore affecerit. Quam quidem S. C. auctoritatem iidem conservatores per senatus P. Q. R. scribas in acta referri atque in Capitolii curiâ servari, privilegiumque hujusmodi fieri, solitoque urbis sigillo communiri curarunt. Anno ab urbe condita CXƆCCCXXXI. *Post Christum natum* MDLXXXI. III. *idus Martii.*

Horatius Fuscus Sacri S. P. Q. R. scriba.
Vincent. Martholus Sacri S. P. Q. R. scriba.

Being before burgeſs of no city at all, I was glad to be created free of the moſt noble city that ever was, or ever will be. If other men would conſider themſelves, as attentively as I do, they would, as I do, diſcover themſelves to be full of vanity and foppery; and rid myſelf of it I cannot, without making myſelf away. We are all leavened with it, as well one as another; but they who are ſenſible of it, have the better bargain, and yet I know not whether they have or no.

Why man does not love to know and obſerve himſelf.

This opinion, and common cuſtom to obſerve others more than ourſelves, has very much relieved us. It is a very diſpleaſing object: we ſee nothing in it but miſery and vanity. Nature, that we may not be dejected with the ſight of our own deformities, has wiſely projected

jected our optic organ outward. We go forward with the current, but to turn back towards ourselves is a painful motion; thus is the sea agitated and troubled when the waves are repelled against one another. Observe, says every one, the motion of the heavens; the revolution of public affairs; observe the quarrel of such a person; feel such a one's pulse; mind another's last will and testament; in short, be always looking high or low, or on one side, or before or behind you. It was a paradoxical command anciently given us by the god at Delphos: "Look into yourself, discover yourself, keep close to "yourself; call back your mind and will, that elsewhere "consume themselves, into yourself; you run out, you "waste yourself; collect yourself; support yourself; "men betray you, men spoil you, men steal you from "yourself." Dost not thou see that this world keeps all its views confined within, and its eyes open to contemplate itself? It is always vanity for thee, both within and without; but it is less vanity when less extended. Excepting thee, (O man) said that god, every thing studies itself first, and has bounds to its labours and desires, according to its need. There is nothing so empty and necessitous as thou who embracest the universe; thou art the explorator without knowledge, the magistrate without jurisdiction; and after all, the fool in the play.

CHAP. X.

Of managing the Will.

Montaigne kept his affections in a moderate state.

FEW things in comparison of what commonly affect other men, move, or to speak more properly, captivate me: for it is but reason they should concern a man, provided they do not wholly engross him. I am very solicitous, both by study and argument, to enlarge this privilege of sinen-

inſenſibility, which in me is naturally far advanced, ſo that I eſpouſe, and am conſequently moved with few things. I have a clear ſight, but I fix it upon very few objects; have a ſenſe delicate and tender, but an apprehenſion and application hard and dull; I am very unwilling to engage myſelf. As much as in me lies, I employ myſelf wholly for myſelf; and in this very ſubject, would rather chuſe to curb and reſtrain my affection from plunging entirely into it, it being a ſubject that I poſſeſs at the mercy of others, and over which fortune has more right than I. Even ſo far as to health, which I ſo much value, it were neceſſary for me, not ſo paſſionately to covet and deſire it, as to think diſeaſes inſupportable. There ought to be a medium betwixt the hatred of pain, and love of pleaſure. And Plato preſcribes the very thing.

Why he ſtrove againſt thoſe which attached him to what was foreign to himſelf.

But againſt ſuch affections as carry me away from myſelf, and fix me elſewhere, againſt thoſe, I ſay, I oppoſe myſelf with all my force. It is my opinion, that a man ſhould lend himſelf to others, and only give himſelf to himſelf. Were my will eaſy to be engaged and ſwayed, I would not ſtick there: I am too tender both by nature and habit,

——*Fugax rerum, ſecuraque in otia natus* *.

I fly from buſineſs as from a diſeaſe;
Having been bred in negligence and eaſe,

for hot and obſtinate diſputes wherein my adverſary would at laſt have the better; and the iſſue, which would render my heat of argument diſgraceful, would perhaps vex me to the laſt degree. Should I ſet myſelf to it as earneſtly as others do, my ſoul would never be able to

* Ovid. de Triſt. lib. iii. eleg. 2. ver. 91

bear the emotion and alarms, which those feel who grasp so much, and it would immediately be distracted by this inward agitation. If sometimes I have been put upon the management of other men's affairs, I have promised to take them in hand, but not into my lungs and liver; to charge myself with them, not to incorporate them: to take pains, but not to be passionate in them; I have a regard to them, but I will not brood over them: I have enough to do to order and govern the domestic throng that I have in my own veins and bowels, without harbouring and loading myself with a crowd of other men's affairs, and have enough of own proper and natural business to mind, without calling in the concerns of others. Such as know how much they owe to themselves, and how many offices they are bound to of their own, find, that nature has cut them out work enough of their own to keep them from being idle. Thou hast business enough at home, look to that. Men let themselves out to hire; their faculties are not for themselves, but are employed for those to whom they have enslaved themselves; this common humour pleases not me. We must be thrifty of the liberty of our souls, and never let them out but upon just occasions, which if we judge aright, are very few. Do but observe such as have accustomed themselves to be at every one's call and command; they are so upon all, as well little as great, occasions, in what does not concern them, as well as in what does. They intrude themselves indifferently wherever there is business, and are without life, when not in some bustle of affairs. *In negotiis sunt negotii causâ* *; "they only seek business for "business sake." It is not so much that they desire to go, as it is that they cannot stand still: like a rowling stone from a hill, that stops not, till it is at the bottom. Business, in a certain sort of men, is a mark of understanding, and dignity. Their minds are not easy but in agitation, as children that must be rocked in a cradle. They may pronounce themselves as serviceable to their friends,

* Seneca, epist. 22.

as

as troubleſome to themſelves. No one is laviſh of his money to another, but every one is ready to give him his time and his life. There is nothing of which we are ſo prodigal as of theſe things, of which to be thriſty, would be both commendable and uſeful. I am of a quit contrary humour. I look to myſelf, and commonly covet with no great ardour what I do deſire, and deſire little: I employ and buſy myſelf likewiſe but rarely and temperately. Whatever they aim at, and take in hand they do it with their utmoſt deſire and with vehemency. There are ſo many wrong ſteps in life, that for the greater ſafety, we muſt a little lightly and ſuperficially ſlide through the world, and not plunge into it over head and ears. Pleaſure itſelf is painful at the bottom.

——incedis per ignes
Suppoſitos cineri doloſo *.

Thou upon glowing coals doſt tread,
Under deceitful aſhes hid,

Montaigne obliged to ſerve the office of mayor of Bourdeaux.

The parliament of Bourdeaux choſe me mayor of their city, at a time when I was far from France, and much farther from any ſuch thought: I entreated to be excuſed; but I was told that I was to blame, the king having alſo interpoſed his command in that affair. It is an office that ought to be looked upon the more honourable, as it has no ſalary nor advantage but the bare honour of its execution: it continues two years, but may be extended by a ſecond election, which very rarely happens; but it did to me, though it never did ſo but twice before: viz. ſome years ago to Monſieur de Lanſac, and lately to Monſieur de Biron, mareſchal of France, in whoſe place I ſucceeded, and left mine to Monſieur de Matignon, mareſchal of France alſo, proud of ſo noble a fraternity.

* Hor. lib. ii. ode 1. ver. 7.

Uterque bonus pacis bellique minister *.

Both fit for governing in peace and war.

Fortune would have a hand in my promotion, by this particular circumstance which she put in of her own, not altogether vain; for Alexander disdained the ambassadors of Corinth, who offered him the freedom of their city; but when they informed him, that Bacchus and Hercules were also in the register, he thankfully accepted it.

The character he gave of himself to the magistrates of Bourdeaux.

At my arrival, I faithfully and conscientiously represented myself to them such as I find myself to be; a man without memory, without vigilance, without experience, and without vigour; but likewise void of hatred, ambition, avarice, and violence; that they might know what they were to expect from my service. And because the knowledge they had of my deceased father, and the honour in which they held his memory, were their only motives to confer this favour upon me, I plainly told them, that I would be very sorry any thing should make so great an impression upon me as their affairs, and the concerns of their city had done upon him, whilst he had the care of them in the same government to which they had preferred me. I very well remember when I was a boy, to have seen him in his old age, cruelly tormented with the toil of the public affairs; forgetting the sweet calm of his own house, to which his age and infirmity had attached him for several years before; regardless of his own affairs, and of his health, and really despising his own life, which was in great danger of being lost by being engaged in long and painful journeys for their service. Such was he, and this humour of his proceeded from great good nature. Never was there a more charitable and public-

* Æneid. lib. xi. ver. 658.

spi-

ſpirited ſoul. Yet this proceeding which I commend in another, I do not love to follow myſelf, and am not without excuſe. He had learnt, that a man muſt forget himſelf for his neighbour, and that individuals were of no manner of conſideration in compariſon with the general concern.

Why the ſages recommended it to men to neglect themſelves for the ſake of the public

Moſt of the rules and precepts of this world tend to drive us out of ourſelves to go a hunting for the benefit of the ſociety. They thought to do a great feat, to divert and ſeparate us from ourſelves, preſuming we were but too much attached to ourſelves by a too natural inclination, and have left nothing unſaid to that purpoſe: for it is no new thing for wiſe men to preach up things as they ſerve, not as they are. Truth has its obſtructions, inconveniences, and incompatibilities with us. We muſt be often deceived, that we may not deceive ourſelves. Our eyes muſt be ſhut, and our underſtandings ſtupified to recover and amend them. *Imperiti enim judicant, & qui frequenter in hoc ipſum fallendi ſunt, ne errent*; "for the ignorant judge, and therefore are "oft to be deceived leſt they ſhould err." When they preſcribe to us to love three, four, and fifty degrees of things above ourſelves, they do like archers, who, to hit the white, take their aim a great deal higher than the butt. To ſet a crooked ſtick ſtrait, we bend it the contrary way. I believe that in the temple of Pallas, as we ſee in all other religions, there were apparent myſteries to be expoſed to the people, and others more ſecret and ſublime, that were only to be ſhown to ſuch as where the profeſſors.

The truly wiſe man is convinced of the obligation which he owes to others, by knowing what he owes to himſelf.

It is likely that the true point of friendſhip, that every one owes to himſelf is to be found in theſe things; not a falſe friendſhip, that makes us embrace glory, knowledge, riches, and the like, with a principal and immoderate affection, as members of our being; nor an indiſcreet

and effeminate friendſhip, which, like ivy, decays and ruins the walls it embraces: but a ſound and regular friendſhip, equally profitable and pleaſant. Whoever knows the duties of this friendſhip, and practiſes them, is truly of the cabinet-council of the Muſes, and has attained to the height of human wiſdom, and our happineſs. Such a one, exactly knowing what he owes to himſelf, will on his part find that he ought to apply the uſe of the world, and of other men to himſelf, and for this end to contribute the duties and offices appertaining to him to the public ſociety. He who lives not in ſome ſort for others, lives not much for himſelf. *Qui ſibi amicus eſt, ſcito hunc amicum omnibus eſſe**; "he who is his "own friend, is a friend to all men." The principal charge we have, is, to every one to take care of himſelf: and it is for this that we here live. As he who would omit to lead a virtuous and holy life, and think he acquitted himſelf of his duty, by inſtructing and training others up to it, would be a fool; even ſo he, who abandons his own healthful and pleaſant life to ſerve others, takes, in my opinion, a courſe that is wrong, and unnatural.

He that is too eager in the exerciſe of an office cannot manage it with prudence nor equity.

I would not that men ſhould refuſe, in the employments they take upon them, their attention, pains, their eloquence, and if need be, their ſweat and blood.

non ille pro caris amicis
Aut patriâ timidus perire †.

Dares for his country or his friend to die.

But this is by way of loan and accidentally; his mind being always, in repoſe and in health; not without ac-

* Sen. epiſt. 6. at the end. † Hor. lib. iv. ode 9. ver. 52.

tion

tion, but without vexation, without paſſion. Merely to act, coſts him ſo little, that he acts even ſleeping. But it muſt be put into briſk motion with diſcretion; for the body receives the offices impoſed upon it, juſt according to what they are; the mind oft extends, and makes them heavier at its own expence, giving them what meaſure it pleaſes. Men perform like things with different efforts, and a different contention of the will; the one does well enough without the other. For how many people hazard themſelves every day in war, without any concern which way it goes, and thruſt themſelves into the dangers of battles, the loſs of which will not break their next night's ſleep? And there are men at home, out of ſuch danger, which they durſt not have faced, who are more paſſionately concerned for the iſſue of this war, and whoſe ſoul is more anxious about the events of it than the ſoldier who ſpends his life and blood in it. I could have engaged myſelf in public employments, without quitting myſelf a hair's breadth, and have given myſelf to others, without abandoning myſelf; this eagerneſs and vehemence of deſires more hinders than advances the conduct of what we undertake; fills us with impatience againſt ſlow or contrary events, and with bitterneſs and ſuſpicion againſt thoſe, with whom we have to do. We never carry on that thing well, by which we are wholly poſſeſſed and governed.

Male cuncta miniſtrat
Impetus *.

With heated minds we ne'er conduct things well.

He, who therein employs only his judgment and addreſs, proceeds more chearfully: he counterfeits, he gives way, he defers all things at his eaſe, according to the neceſſities of occaſions; he fails in his attempts without trouble and affliction, ready and entire for a

* Statius in Thebais, lib. x. ver. 4. & 5.

new enterprize: he always marches with the bridle in his hand. In him who is intoxicated with this violent and tyrannical intention, we neceſſarily diſcover much imprudence and injuſtice. The impetuoſity of his deſire carries him away. Theſe are raſh motions, and, if fortune do not very much aſſiſt, of very little fruit.

That the chaſtiſement of offences ought to be performed without anger.

Philoſophy requires, that in the puniſhment of injuries received, we ſhould diveſt ourſelves of choler; not that the revenge ſhould be leſs, but, on the contrary, that it may be the better applied and the more heavily laid on, which, it is conceived, will be hindered by this impetuoſity. For anger not only troubles, but of itſelf alſo wearies the arms of thoſe who chaſtiſe. This fire benumbs and waſtes their ſtrength. As in precipitancy, *feſtinatio tarda eſt*; "the more haſte, the "worſe ſpeed." Haſte trips up its own heels, fetters and ſtops itſelf, *ipſe ſe velocitas implicat* *. For example: according to what I commonly ſee, avarice has no greater impediment than itſelf. The more intenſe and vigorous it is, the leſs it rakes together, and commonly ſooner gathers riches when diſguiſed under a maſk of liberality.

Excellent character of a prince who was ſuperior to the accidents of his fortune.

A very honeſt gentleman, a friend of mine, had like to have cracked his brains by a too paſſionate attention to the affairs of a certain prince, his maſter; which maſter has thus painted himſelf to me; that he foreſees the weight of accidents as well as another; but that in thoſe for which there is no remedy, he preſently reſolves upon patience. In others, having taken all the neceſſary precautions, which by the vivacity of his underſtanding he can ſoon do, he calmly waits what may follow. And, in truth, I have accordingly ſeen him maintain a great indifferency and freedom of actions, and countenance, in very great and perplexed affairs. I find him a greater, and a more able man

* Seneca, epiſt. 44. at the end.

in

in adverſity than proſperity. His loſſes are to him more glorious than his victories, and his mourning than his triumphs.

It is an advantage in gaming to keep one's temper both in gain and loſs.

Do but conſider, that even in vain and frivolous actions, as at cheſs, tennis, and the like, this eager and ardent engaging with an impetuous deſire, immediately throws the mind and members into indiſcretion and diſorder. A man puzzles and bewilders himſelf. He that carries himſelf the moſt moderately both towards gain and loſs, has always his wits about him. The leſs peeviſh and paſſionate he is at play, he plays with much more advantage and ſafety.

A man ought to know his own ſolid intereſt.

As to the reſt, we hinder the mind's graſp in giving it ſo many things to ſeize upon. Some things we are only to offer to it, to tie it to others, and with others to incorporate it. I can feel and diſcern all things, but ought to feed on nothing but ſelf; and ſhould be inſtructed in what properly concerns itſelf, and what is properly of its own poſſeſſion and ſubſtance: the laws of nature teach us what we are juſtly to have. After the ſages have told us, that no one is indigent by nature, and that every one is ſo according to opinion, they very ſubtilly diſtinguiſh betwixt the deſires that proceed from the former, and thoſe that proceed from the irregularity of our fancy. Thoſe, of which we can ſee the end, are nature's; thoſe that fly before us, and of which we can ſee no end, are our own. There is an eaſy cure for the want of goods; but the poverty of the ſoul is incurable,

Nam ſi, quod ſatis eſt homini, id ſatis eſſe poteſſet,
Hoc ſat erat: nunc, quum hoc non eſt, qui credimus porro,
Divitias ullas animum mî explere poteſſe †?

† Lucilius, lib. v. apud Nunnium, cap. 5. § 98.

If

If what's for man enough, enough could be,
It were enough; but as we plainly see
That wont suffice; how can I e'er believe
That any wealth my mind content can give?

Socrates seeing a heap of treasure, jewels, and costly furniture, carried in pomp through the city, "how "many things *," said he, "do I not desire!" Metrodorus lived on the weight of twelve ounces a day; Epicurus upon less: Metrocles † in winter slept abroad amongst sheep, in summer in the cloisters of churches. *Sufficit ad id natura quod poscit* ‡; "nature furnishes what "it absolutely needs." Cleanthes lived by the labour of his own hands, and boasted, "that Cleanthes, if he "he would, could yet maintain another Cleanthes ‖."

Why his necessities may be extended a little beyond the necessary demands of nature.

If that, which nature exactly and originally requires of us for the preservation of our being, be too little, (as in truth, how much it is, and how cheaply life may be maintained, cannot be better made out, than by this consideration, that it is so little, that by its littleness it escapes the gripe and shock of fortune) let us allow ourselves a little more, let us even call every one of our habits and conditions nature; let us tax and treat ourselves by this measure, let us stretch our appurtenances and accompts thus far; for so far I fancy we have some excuse. Custom is a second nature, and no less powerful. What is wanting to my custom, I reckon as wanting to me; and I would be almost as well content that they took away my life, as retrench me in the way wherein I have so long lived. I am past the terms of any great change, nor able to put myself into a new and unwonted course, though it were to my

* Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. v. cap. 32. † Plutarch, in his tract entitled, that Vice alone is sufficient to make a Man unhappy, chap. 4.
‡ Seneca, epist. 18. ‖ It was Zeno who said this to Cleanthes, his disciple, if we may believe Diogenes Laertius in the life of Cleanthes, lib. vii. § 169, 176.

advantage; it is past the time for me to become other than what I am. And I would complain of any great good adventure that should now befal me, that it came not in time to be enjoyed;

Quo mihi fortunas, si non conceditur uti ?*

Might I have the world's wealth, I should refuse it;
What good will't do me, if I may not use it?

so would I complain of my inward acquisition. It were almost better never, than so late, to become honourable; and to know the world thoroughly when a man has no longer to live. I, who am going out of it, would easily resign to any new comer all the prudence I have acquired in the world's commerce. "After meat comes "mustard." I have no need of goods, of which I can make no use. Of what use is knowledge to him that has lost his head? it is an injury and unkindness in fortune, to tender us presents that will inspire us with a just resentment that we had them not in their season. Guide me no more, I can no longer go. Of so many parts as make up a sufficiency, patience is the best. Assign the part of an excellent treble to a chorister that has rotten lungs, and eloquence to a hermit exiled into the deserts of Arabia. There is no art necessary for a fall; the end comes of itself, at the conclusion of every affair. My world is at an end, my form expired; it is all over with me; and I am bound to authorise it, and to conform my exit to it. I will here declare, by way of example, that the late ten days diminution of the year by the pope, has taken me so low, that I cannot well reconcile myself to it. I follow the years wherein we kept another kind of account: so ancient, and so long a custom, challenges and calls me back to it; so that I am constrained to be a kind of heretic in that point, impatient of any, though corrective, innovation. My imagination, in spite of my teeth, always pushes me ten days

The abridgment of ten days offered by the pope.

* Hor. lib. i. epist. 5. ver. 12.

forward

forward or backward, and is ever murmuring in my ears. This rule concerns those who are to begin to be. If health itself, as sweet as it is, returns to me by intervals, it is rather to give me cause of regret than possession of it; I have no longer the means of recovering it. Time leaves me, without which nothing can be possessed. Oh, what little account should I make of those great elective dignities that I see in the world, which are only conferred upon men who are taking leave of it! Wherein it is not so much regarded how well he will discharge them, as how little a while; from the very entrance they have an eye to the exit. To conclude, I am ready to finish this man, and not to rebuild another. By long custom, this form is, in me, turned into substance, and fortune into nature. I say therefore, that every one of us feeble creatures is excusable in thinking that his own, which is comprized under this measure; but beyond these limits, it is nothing but confusion; it is the largest extent we can grant to our prerogative. The more we amplify our possessions, so much the more do we expose ourselves to the strokes of fortune and adversity. The career of our desires ought to be circumscribed, and restrained to a short limit of near and contiguous conveniencies; and ought moreover to perform their course, not in a right line, that ends elsewhere, but in a circle, of which the two points by a short circumvolution meet and terminate in ourselves. Actions that are carried on without this reflection, a near and essential reflection I mean, such as those of ambitious and avaricious men, and many more, who run from the point, and whose career always carries them before themselves, such actions, I say, are erroneous and crazy.

An honest man is not corrupted by the employment he exercises.

Most of our business is farce. *Mundus universus exercet histrionem* ‡. We must play our part duly, but nevertheless as the part of a borrowed person; we must not make real essence out of a vizor

‡ Petronius Arbiter, lib. iii. cap. 3.

and

and outward appearance, nor of a ſtrange perſon our own; we cannot diſtinguiſh things that are near from thoſe that are remote; it is enough to meal the face, without mealing the breaſt. I ſee ſome, who transform and tranſubſtantiate themſelves into as many new ſhapes and new beings as they undertake employments, and who, with the pride of Lucifer, carry their office along with them, even to their cloſe-ſtool: I cannot make them diſtinguiſh the ſalutations made to them, from thoſe that are made to their commiſſion, their train, or their mule. *Tantum ſe fortunæ permittunt, etiam ut naturam dediſcant* *; "they are ſo intoxicated with their "fortune, as even to forget their nature." They ſwell and puff up their ſouls, and their natural tone of ſpeaking according to the height of their place. The mayor and Montaigne have ever been two perſons, by very manifeſt ſeparation. To be an advocate or a treaſurer, a man muſt not be ignorant of the knavery of ſuch callings; an honeſt man is not accountable for the vices or folly of his profeſſion, and yet ought not to refuſe to take it upon him: it is the cuſtom of his country, and there is money to be got by it; a man muſt live by the world, and make his beſt of it, ſuch as it is. But the judgment of an emperor ought to be upon his empire, and the ſeeing and conſidering of it, as of a foreign accident: and he ought to know how to enjoy himſelf apart from it, and to communicate himſelf, as James and Peter, to himſelf at leaſt. I cannot engage myſelf ſo deep and entire.

Montaigne, by eſpouſing a party, did not eſpouſe its fury, injuſtice, and ridiculous whimſies.

When my will gives me up to a party, it is not with ſo violent an obligation as to infect my underſtanding. In the preſent broils of this kingdom, my intereſt has not made me forget the qualities of our adverſaries that are laudable, nor thoſe that are reproachable in our party. They adore all of their own ſide; for my part I do not ſo much as excuſe thoſe things in mine: a good piece has never the worſe grace for being levelled at me. The knot of the con-

* Quin. Cur. lib iii. cap. 2.

troverſy

troverſy excepted, I have always kept myſelf in equanimity and pure indifference. *Neque extra neceſſitates belli præcipuum odium gero*; "and have no particular hatred "beyond the neceſſities of war." For which I am pleaſed with myſelf, and the more, becauſe I ſee common failings on the contrary ſide. Such as extended their anger and hatred beyond the diſpute in queſtion, as moſt men do, ſhew that they ſpring from ſome other motive and particular cauſe; like one, who being cured of an ulcer, has yet a remaining fever, by which it appears that the latter had another ſource more concealed. Thus they are not concerned in the common cauſe, as it is wounding to the intereſt of the ſtate and the public, but are only animated by their private concerns. This is the true reaſon why they are ſo particularly piqued, and to a degree beyond juſtice and public reaſon. *Non tam omnia univerſi, quam ea, quæ ad quemque pertinent, ſinguli carpebant*; "every one was not ſo much angry at things "in general, as at thoſe that particularly concerned "themſelves." I would have matters go well on our ſide; but if they do not, I ſhall not run mad. I am heartily for the right party; but I do not affect to be taken notice of in particular for an enemy to the others, and beyond the general reaſon. I am a mortal enemy to this vicious form of cenſure: "He is of the league, "becauſe he admires the perſon of the duke of Guiſe. "Another is aſtoniſhed at the king of Navarre's activity, "and therefore he is a Hugonot. Another finds ſuch "and ſuch faults in the king's conduct, and there-"fore he is ſeditious in his heart." I would not grant to a magiſtrate himſelf, that he did well in condemning a book, becauſe it had ranked a heretic among the beſt poets of the time. Shall we not dare to ſay of a thief, that he has a handſome leg? If a woman be a ſtrumpet, muſt it needs follow that ſhe has a ſtinking breath? Did they in the wiſeſt ages revoke the ſuperb title of Capitolinus, which they had before confered upon Marcus Manlius, as the conſervator of religion and public liberty; did they ſtifle the memory of his liberality, his feats of arms and the military rewards granted to his virtue, becauſe he afterwards aſpired to the

the ſovereignty, in prejudice of the laws of his country? If they have taken a hatred againſt an advocate, he will not be allowed the next day to be eloquent. I have elſewhere ſpoke of the zeal that puſhed on worthy men to the like faults. For my part, I can ſay, ſuch a one does this thing wickedly, and another thing virtuouſly. In like manner, in the prognoſtics, or ſiniſter events of affairs, they pronounce every one of his party to be blind, or a blockhead, and require our perſuaſion and judgment to be ſubſervient, not to truth, but to the project of our wiſhes. I would rather incline towards the other extreme, ſo much do I fear being influenced by my deſire: to which may be added, that I am a little tenderly diſtruſtful of things that I wiſh.

The indiſcreet facility of people in ſuffering themſelves to be impoſed upon by the leaders of a party.

I have in my time ſeen wonders in that indiſcreet and prodigious readineſs of people in ſuffering their hopes and belief to be led and governed which way has beſt pleaſed and ſerved their leaders, through a hundred miſtakes one upon another; and through dreams and phantaſms. I no longer wonder at thoſe who have been ſeduced by the fooleries of Apollonius and Mahomet. Their ſenſe and underſtanding is abſolutely ſtifled in their paſſion; their diſcretion has no more any other choice than that which ſmiles upon them, and encourages their cauſe. I had principally obſerved this in the beginning of our inteſtine heats; this other, which is ſprung up ſince, by imitating, has ſurpaſſed it; by which I am induced to think that it is a quality inſeparable from popular errors. After the firſt that ſtarts, opinions drive on one another like waves with the wind. A man is not a member of the body, if it be in his power to forſake it, and if he do not run with the herd; but certainly they wrong the juſt ſide, when they go about to aſſiſt it with fraud. I have ever been againſt that practice. This can only work upon weak heads; as for the ſound there are ſurer, as well as more honeſt ways to keep up their courage, and to excuſe croſs accidents.

Heaven

Difference betwixt Cæsar and Pompey's war and that which was fomented betwixt Marius and Sylla.

Heaven never beheld so great an animosity as that betwixt Cæsar and Pompey, nor ever will; and yet I observe methinks in those brave souls a great moderation towards one another. It was a jealousy of honour and command, which did not transport them to a furious and indiscreet hatred; their's was hatred without malignity and detraction. In their hottest exploits, I discover some remains of respect and good-will; and therefore am of opinion, that, had it been possible, each of them would rather have done his business without the ruin of the other, than with it. Take notice how much otherwise matters went with Marius and Sylla?

The danger of a man's being a slave to his affections.

We must not be so desperately driven by our affections and interest. As when I was young, I opposed the progress of love, which I perceived to advance too fast upon me, and took care lest it should at last become so pleasing, as to captivate, and wholly reduce me to its mercy: so I do the same upon all other occasions where my will runs on with too keen an appetite. I lean opposite to the side it inclines to, as I find it going to plunge and make itself drunk with its own wine; I avoid nourishing its pleasure so far, that I cannot recover it without a cruel loss. Souls that, through their own stupidity, only discern things by halves, have this happiness, that they smart least with hurtful things. It is a mental leprosy that has some appearance of health, and such a health as philosophy does not altogether contemn; but yet we have no reason to call it wisdom, as we often do. After this manner one anciently mocked Diogenes, who in the depth of winter, and stark-naked, went to embrace a statue covered with snow for a trial of his patience *. The other meeting him in this plight, "art thou not very cold?" said he †, "not at all," replied Diogenes. "Why then," said the other, "what

* Diog. Laert. in the life of Diogenes the Cynic, lib. vi. § 23.
† Plutarch, in the Notable sayings of the Lacedæmonians.

"great

"great and exemplary thing canſt thou "think thou doſt, in embracing the "ſnow? A man, to take a true meaſure of conſtancy, muſt neceſſarily know what ſuffering is.

Diogenes patient of cold.

But ſouls that are to meet with croſs events, and the injuries of fortune in their depth and ſeverity, that are to weigh and taſte them according to their natural weight and ſharpneſs, let ſuch ſhew their ſkill in avoiding the cauſes and diverting the blow. What did king Cotys do *? He paid me liberally for the rich and beautiful veſſel that had been preſented him; but it being exceeding brittle, he immediately broke it to prevent in good time ſo eaſy a matter of diſpleaſure againſt his ſervants. In like manner, I have willingly avoided all confuſion in my affairs, and never coveted to have my eſtate contiguous to thoſe of my relations, and perſons with whom I was deſirous of a ſtrict friendſhip; whence matters of unkindneſs, and which has oft occaſioned a ſtrangeneſs and a ſeparation. I have formerly loved the hazardous games of cards and dice, but have long ſince left them off, only for this reaſon, that though I put a good face on my loſſes, I was vexed at my heart. Let a man of honour, who ought heartily to reſent a lye and an affront, and who is not to take a bad excuſe for ſatisfaction, avoid occaſions of diſpute. I ſhun melancholic and moroſe men, as I would do the plague. And in matters I cannot treat of without emotion and concern, I never meddle, if not compelled by my duty. *Melius non incipient, quam deſinent* †; "a man had better never "to have begun, than to leave undone." The ſureſt way therefore, is, to prepare a man's ſelf beforehand for occaſions. I know very well, that ſome wiſe men have taken another courſe, and have not feared to grapple and engage to the utmoſt upon ſeveral ſubjects. Such are

How Montaigne endeavoured to prevent bad accidents in the management of his affairs and actions.

A rich veſſel purpoſely broken by king Cotys and why.

* Plutarch, in the Notable ſayings of ancient kings, &c. in the article Cotys. † Senec. ep. 92.

confident of their own ſtrength, under which they protect themſelves in all ill ſucceſſes, making their patience wreſtle with diſaſters.

—Velut rupes vaſtum quæ prodit in æquor,
Obvia ventorum furiis, expoſtaque ponto,
Vim cunctam atque minas perfert cœlique mariſque,
Ipſa immota manens. *

He as a rock amongſt vaſt billows ſtood,
Scorning loud winds, and raging of the flood,
And fix'd remaining all the force defies
Muſter'd from threat'ning ſeas and thund'ring ſkies †.

Let us never attempt theſe examples, we ſhall never come up to them. They ſet themſelves reſolutely, and without trouble, to behold the ruin of their country, which had a right to all the good they could do. This is too much, and too harſh for our vulgar ſouls to undergo. Cato indeed gave up the nobleſt life that ever was upon this account; but it is for us meaner ſpirited men to fly from the ſtorm as far as we can; we ought to make proviſion of reſentment, not of patience, and evade the blows we cannot put by. Zeno ſeeing Chremonides, a young man whom he loved, draw near to ſit down by him, ſuddenly ſtarted up, and Cleanthes demanding of him the reaſon why he did ſo, "I hear, ſaid he, that phyſicians ſtrictly "enjoin repoſe, and forbid emotion in all tumours ‡." Socrates ſays not, Do not ſurrender to the charms of beauty, ſtand your ground, and do your utmoſt to oppoſe it. Fly from it, ſays he, ſhun the ſight and encounter of it, as you would from ſtrong poiſon that darts and wounds at a diſtance. And his good diſciple ‖, either feigning or reciting, but in my opinion, rather reciting than feigning the rare perfections of that great Cyrus, makes him diſtruſtful of his own ſtrength, to reſiſt the charms of the divine beauty of the illuſtrious Panthea, his captive, in committing her to the obſerva-

* Virgil. Æneid. lib. x. ver. 693. † Mr. Ogilby.
‡ Diogenes Laert. in the life of Zeno, lib. vii. ſect. 17.
‖ Xenophon, in his Cyropædia, lib. v. cap. 1. ver. 3, 4, 5, 6.

tion

obſervation and keeping of another, who was more enamoured than himſelf. And the Holy Ghoſt in like manner, *Ne nos inducas in tentationem*; "lead us not into temptation," Matth. vi. ver. 13. We do not pray that our reaſon may not be combated and overcome by concupiſcence, but that it be not ſo much as tried by it; that we may not be brought into a ſtate wherein we may be ſo much as liable to ſuffer the approaches, ſollicitations, and temptations of ſin: and we beg of almighty God to keep our conſciences quiet, fully, and perfectly free from all communication with evil.

He endeavoured to check the firſt ſally of his paſſions.

Such as ſay that they have reaſon for their revenging paſſion, or any other ſort of troubleſome agitation of mind, oft ſay true, as things now are, but not as they were. They ſpeak to us when the cauſes of their error are by themſelves nouriſhed and advanced. But look backward, recal theſe cauſes to their beginning, and there you will put them to a nonplus; will they think their fault leſs for being of longer continuance, and that of an unjuſt beginning, the ſequel can be juſt? whoever ſhall deſire the good of his country as I do, without fretting or pining himſelf, will be chagrined, but will not ſwoon to ſee it threatening either its final ruin, or no leſs ruinous continuance. Poor veſſel, which the waves, the winds, and the pilot, ſteer to with ſuch contrary views!

—in tam diverſa, magiſter,
*Ventus, & unda trahunt.**

He who pants not for the favour of princes, as a thing he cannot live without, does not much concern himſelf at the coldneſs of their reception and countenance, nor at the inconſtancy of their humours. He who does not brood over his children, or his honours, with a ſlaviſh fondneſs, lives commodiouſly enough after their loſs. He that does good principally for his own ſatisfaction, will not be much troubled to ſee men judge of

* Buchanan.

his actions contrary to his merit. A quarter of an ounce of patience will be enough againſt ſuch inconveniencies. I find ſatisfaction in this receipt, redeeming myſelf in the beginning as cheaply as I can; and am ſenſible that I have thereby eſcaped much trouble and many difficulties. With very little ado I ſtop the firſt ſally of my paſſions, and leave the ſubject that begins to be troubleſome before it tranſports me. He who ſtops not the ſtart, will never be able to ſtop the career. He who cannot keep the paſſions out, will never drive them out when they are got in; and he who cannot cruſh them at the beginning, will never do it in the end, nor ever recover his fall, if he cannot ſtand the ſhock. *Et enim ipſæ ſe impellunt, ubi ſemel â ratione diſceſſum eſt: ipſaque ſibi imbecillitas indulget, in altumque provehitur imprudens: ne creperit locum conſiſtendi**; "for men are precipitant, when once they loſe their "reaſon; and frailty does ſo far indulge itſelf, that it is in- "diſcreetly carried out into the deep, and can find no port "to ſtop at." I am betimes ſenſible of the little breezes that begin to whiſtle in the Shrowds, the forerunners of a ſtorm.

—ceu flamina prima
Cum deprenſa fremunt ſylvis, & cæca volutant
Murmura, venturos nautis prodentia ventos †.

— As when winds riſe,
And ſtopt by woods, a ſudden murmur ſend,
Which doth a ſtorm to mariners portend ‡.

With what care he avoided law ſuits.

How oft have I done myſelf a manifeſt injuſtice to avoid the hazard of having yet a worſe done me by the judges, after an age of vexations, dirty and vile practices, more enemies to my nature than fire, or the rack? *Convenie à litibus quantum licet, & neſcio an paulò plus etiam quàm licet, abhorrentum eſſe. Eſt enim non modò liberale paululum nonnunquam de ſuo jure decedere, ſed interdum etiam fructuoſum* ‖; "A man ſhould be an enemy to all contention as much as

* Cicero Tuſc. lib. iv. cap. 18.
† Æneid. lib. x. ver. 97, &c.
‡ Mr. Ogilby.
‖ Cicer. de Offic. lib. ii. c. 8.

"he

" he lawfully may, and for ought I know something more: " for it is not only generous, but sometimes also advan- " tageous, to recede a little from one's right." Were we wise, we ought to rejoice and boast, as I one day heard a young gentleman of a good family very innocently do, that his mother had lost her trial, as if it had been a cough, a fever, or something very troublesome to keep: even the favours that fortune might have given me through relations, or acquaintance with persons who have great interest, I have very conscientiously waved, and very carefully avoided employing them to the prejudice of others, and of advancing my pretensions above their true value. In fine, I have so much prevailed by my endeavours, in a happy hour I may speak it, that I am at this day a virgin from all suits in law; though I have had very fair offers made me, and with a very just title, would I have hearkened to them: and a virgin from quarrels too. I have almost past over a long life without any offence of moment, either active or passive, or without ever hearing a worse word than my own name: a rare favour of heaven.

The most violent passions raised from trifling causes.

Our greatest agitations arise from ridiculous motives and causes. What ruin did our last duke of *Burgundy* run into by a quarrel about a cart-load of sheep-skins *? And was not the graving of a seal the first and principal cause of the greatest commotion that that this machine of the world ever underwent †? for *Pompey* and *Cæsar* are but the off-sets and slips of the two others. And I have, in my time seen the wisest heads in this kingdom assembled with great ceremony, and at the public expence, about treaties and agreements, of which the true decision absolutely depended upon a cabinet council of ladies, and the inclination of some foolish woman. The poets had a right notion of this, when they put all *Greece* and *Asia* to fire and sword for an apple. Enquire why such a man stakes his life and honour upon the fortune of

* See the Memoirs of Philip de Comines, lib. v. cap. 1.

† The civil war betwixt Marius and Sylla. See Plutarch, in the life of Marius, chap. 3. of Amyot's translation.

his rapier and dagger; let him acquaint you with the occasion of the quarrel, he cannot do it without blushing, it is so idle and frivolous.

The necessity of deliberation before we engage in affairs, especially quarrels.

A little thing will do at setting off, but being once embarked, all cords draw; great provisions are then required, more hard, and more important. How much easier is it not to enter in, than it is to get out? Now, we should proceed contrary to the reed, which at its first springing, produces a long and strait stalk, but afterwards, as if tired and out of breath, it runs into thick and frequent knots, as so many pauses; which demonstrates that it has no more its first vigour and constancy. It were better to begin fair and softly, and to keep a man's breath and vigorous efforts for the height and stress of the business. We guide affairs in their beginnings, and have them then in our own power; but afterwards when they are in motion, it is they that guide and govern us, and we are to follow them. Yet I pretend not hereby to say, that this counsel has discharged me of all difficulty, and that I have not often had enough to do to curb and restrain my passions. They are not always to be governed according to the measure of occasions, and the entrance on them is often sharp and violent; so it is, that thereby much may be saved and got; except for those, who in well-doing are not satisfied with any benefit, if reputation be wanting: for in truth, such an effect is of no estimation but by every one to himself. You are better contented with it, but not more esteemed; seeing you reformed yourself before you had the subject in view. Yet not in this only, but in all other duties of life, the way of those who aim at honour, is very different from that they proceed by, who propose to themselves order and reason. I find some who rashly and furiously rush into the lists, and cool in the course. As *Plutarch* says, that as those who through false modesty are soft and ready to grant whatever is desired of them, are afterwards as apt to break their word, and to recant; so likewise he who enters lightly into a quarrel, is subject to go as lightly out. The same difficulty that keeps me from entering into

into it, would, when I am once provoked and warmly engaged in it, ſpur me to maintain it with great obſtinacy. It is the tyranny of cuſtom; that when a Man is once engaged, he muſt perſiſt, or die. "Undertake "coldly, ſaid Bias, but purſue with ardour*." For want of prudence, men grow faint-hearted, which is ſtill more intolerable.

Moſt accommodations of our quarrels are ſcandalous.

Moſt accommodations of the quarrels of theſe days, are ſhameful and falſe; we only ſeek to ſave appearances, and in the mean time betray and diſavow our true intentions. We put a gloſs on the fact. We know very well how we ſaid the thing, and in what ſenſe we ſpoke it, and both all the company, and our friends, whom we would make ſenſible of our advantage, underſtand it well enough too. It is at the expence of our liberty, and the honour of our courage, that we diſown our thoughts, and ſeek ſubterfuge in falſhoods to make us friends. We give ourſelves the lye, to excuſe the lye we have given to another. You are not to conſider, if your word or action may admit of another interpretation; it is your own true and ſincere interpretation that you are thenceforward to maintain, whatever it coſt you. Men ſpeak to your virtue and conſcience, which are not things to be diſguiſed. Let us leave theſe pitiful ways and expedients to the chicanery of the courts of law. The apologies and ſatisfactions that I ſee every day made to excuſe indiſcretion, ſeem to me more ſcandalous than the indiſcretion itſelf. It were better to affront your adverſary a ſecond time, than to offend yourſelf by giving him ſo unmanly a ſatisfaction. You have braved him in your anger, and you go to appeaſe and wheedle him in your cooler and better ſenſe, and by that means lay yourſelf lower than you ſet yourſelf up. I do not think any thing a gentleman can ſay ſo vicious in him, as unſaying what he has ſaid is infamous; when he is forced to unſay it by authority; foraſmuch as obſtinacy is more excuſable in ſuch a man than puſillanimity. Paſſions are

* Diogenes Laert. in the life of Bias. lib. i. § 87.

as eaſy for me to avoid, as they are hard for me to moderate. *Excinduntur facilius animo, quam temperantur*; "they are more eaſily eradicated than to be governed." Who cannot attain to this noble ſtoical impaſſibility, let him ſecure himſelf in the boſom of this popular ſtupidity of mine. What thoſe great ſouls performed by their virtue, I enure myſelf to do by conſtitution. The middle region harbours tempeſts; the two extremes of philoſophers and peaſants concur in tranquility and happineſs.

Fœlix, qui potuit rerum cognoſcere cauſus;
Atque metus omnes, & in exorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, ſtrepitumque Acherontis avari.
Fortunatus, & ille, Deos qui novit agreſtes,
Panaque Sylvanumque ſenem, Nymphaſque ſorores *.

Happy the man who vers'd in nature's laws,
Of her effects can trace the wond'rous cauſe?
Who without fear his certain fate can meet,
And trample death itſelf beneath his feet;
And happy he who haunts the rural gods,
Pan and Sylvanus, and the nymphs abodes †.

The births of all things are weak and tender, and therefore are we to have an eye to their beginnings; for as when in their infancy the danger is not perceived; ſo when it is grown up, the remedy is no more to be found. I had every day encountered a million of croſſes, harder to digeſt in the progreſs of my ambition, than it was for me to curb the natural propenſity that inclined me to it.

—jure perhorrui,
Latè conſpicuum tolere verticem ‡.

Well might thy friend be ſhy,
To raiſe his head too high ‖.

* Virgil. Georg. lib. ii. ver. 490.
† Mr. Benſon.
‡ Hor. lib. iii. ode 16. ver. 18.
‖ Sir Rich. Fanſhaw.

All

What others as well as Montaigne himſelf thought of his conduct, while he was mayor of Bourdeaux.

All public actions are ſubject to various and uncertain interpretations, for too many heads judge of them. Some ſay of this city-employment of mine (and I am willing to ſay a word or two of it, not that it is worth ſo much, but to give an account of my manners in ſuch things) that I behaved myſelf in it like a man not eaſy to be moved, and with a languid affection: and they have ſome colour for what they ſay. I endeavour to keep my mind and my thoughts in repoſe. *Cum ſemper naturâ, tum etiam ætate jàm quietus*; "as being always quiet by nature, ſo alſo "now by age." If they ſometimes launch out upon ſome rude and ſenſible impreſſion, it is in truth without my advice. Yet from this natural decay of my ſpirits men ought not to conclude a total inability in me; (for want of care and want of ſenſe, are two things) and much leſs any ſlight or ingratitude towards that corporation, who did their utmoſt to oblige me, both before they knew me and after. And they did much more for me in chuſing me anew, than in conferring that honour upon me at firſt; I wiſh them all the good that can be. And doubtleſs, upon occaſion, there is nothing I would have ſpared for their ſervice; I exerted myſelf as much for them as I would have done for myſelf. They are a good, warlike and generous people, but capable of obedience and diſcipline, and of whom good uſe may be made, if they are well guided. They ſay alſo, that my adminiſtration was paſſed over without any action of importance. It is true: they moreover accuſe my indolence in a time when every body almoſt was convinced of doing too much. I am impatient to be doing where my will ſpurs me on, but this point is an enemy to perſeverance. Whoever will make uſe of me, according to my own way, let him employ me in affairs where vigour and liberty are required; where a direct, ſhort, and a hazardous conduct are neceſſary, I perhaps may do ſomething; but if it muſt be long, ſubtle, laborious, artificial, and intricate, they were better apply to ſomebody elſe. All important offices are not difficult: I was prepared for work a little more rough,

had

had there been great occasion; for it is in my power to do something more than I do, and than I love to do; I did not to my knowledge, omit any thing that my duty really required; it is true, that I easily forgot those offices that ambition mixes with duty, and gilds with its title. Those are they, that for the most part ingross the eyes and ears, and give men the most satisfaction. Not the thing, but the appearance contents them. They think men sleep if they hear no noise. My humour is an enemy to tumult. I could appease a riot without disturbing myself, and chastise a disorder without many words. If I stand in need of anger, and inflammation, I borrow it, and put it on as a mask; my deportment is dull; rather faint than sharp. I do not condemn a magistrate that sleeps, provided the people under his charge sleep as well as he: the laws in that case sleep too. For my part, I commend a smooth, solitary and silent life. *Neque submissam, & abjectam, neque se efferentem**; "a life equally free from meanness and insolence." My fortune requires it to be such. I am descended from a family that has lived without lustre or tumult, and time out of mind particularly ambitious of valour and sincerity. Our people now adays are so bred up to bustle and ostentation, that good-nature, moderation, equity, constancy, and such quiet and obscure qualities, are no longer regarded. Rough bodies are easily felt, the smooth ones scarce at all. Sickness is felt, health little, if at all, no more than the oils that foment us, in comparison of the pains that torment us. It is acting for a man's reputation and particular profit, not for the public weal, to refer that to be done in the forum, which a man may as well do in the council-chamber; to put off to noon-day, what might have been done the night before; and to be zealous to do that himself which his colleague can do as well as he. So some surgeons of *Greece* performed their operations upon scaffolds, in the sight of the people, to draw more practice and custom. They think that good rules cannot be un-

* Cicero de Offic. lib. i. cap. 34.

derstood

derſtood but by the ſound of trumpet. Ambition is not a vice of little people, and of ſuch abilities as ours. One ſaid to Alexander, your father will leave you a great dominion, eaſy and peaceable; this youth was emulous of his father's victories, and the juſtice of his government, and did not wiſh to have enjoyed the empire of the world in eaſe and peace. Alcibiades in Plato, had rather die exceeding young, beautiful, rich, noble, and learned, than to continue in ſuch an effeminate ſtate. This diſeaſe is perhaps excuſable in ſo ſtrong and ſo capacious a mind. When theſe poor mean ſouls enlarge themſelves, and think to ſpread their fame, for having given right judgment in an affair, or continued the diſcipline of keeping the guard of a gate of their city; the more they think to exalt their heads, the more they ſhew their tails. This little well-doing has neither body nor life; it vaniſhes in the firſt mouth, and goes no farther than from one ſtreet to another. Talk of it in God's name to your ſon, or your ſervant; like that old fellow, who having no other auditor of his praiſes, nor commender of his valour, boaſted to his chamber-maid, crying out, O Perret, what a gallant brave man has thou to thy maſter! At the worſt talk of it to yourſelf, like a counſellor of my acquaintance, who having diſgorged a whole bundle of law caſes, full of paragraphs, with very great heat, and as great folly, coming out of the council-chamber to the piſſing place, was heard very conſcientiouſly to mutter betwixt his teeth, *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, ſed nomini tuo da gloriam*; "not unto us, O "Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory." He who can get it of nobody elſe, may pay himſelf out of his own purſe. Fame is not proſtituted at ſo cheap a rate. Rare and exemplary actions, to which it is due, would not endure the company of this prodigious croud of little temporary performances. Marble may exalt your titles as much as you pleaſe, for having repaired a rood of a ruinous wall, or cleanſed a public aqueduct, but no men of ſenſe will do it. Renown does not attend every good deed, if novelty and difficulty be not conjoined in it. Nay, ſo much as mere eſtimation,

mation, according to the Stoics, is not due to every action that proceeds from virtue; neither will they allow him so much as thanks, who out of temperance forbears to meddle with any old blear-eyed hag. Such as have known the admirable qualities of Scipio Africanus, deny him the glory that Panætius attributes to him, of being abstinent from gifts as a glory not so much his, as that of the age he lived in. We have pleasures suitable to our fortunes, let us not usurp those of grandeur. Our own are more natural, and by so much more solid and sure, as they are more low. If not for that of conscience, yet at least for ambition sake, let us reject ambition, let us disdain that thirst of honour and renown, so low and beggarly, that it makes us ask it as an alms from all sorts of people: *Quæ est ista laus quæ possit è macello peti* *? "What praise is that which is to be got at "the shambles?" by abject means, and at any cheap rate soever. To be so honoured is dishonour. Let us learn to be no more greedy, than we are capable of honour. To be puffed up with every action that is innocent, or of use, is only for those with whom such deeds are extraordinary and rare; they will value it as it costs them. How much more a good effect makes a noise, so much I abate of the goodness of it; and suspect that it was more performed to be talked of, than upon the account of its goodness: being exposed upon the stall, it is half sold. Those actions have much more grace, that slip from the hand of the performer negligently, and without noise; and which some honest man afterwards chuses out, and raises from the shade, to produce it to the light for their own sakes. The vainest man in the world said, *mihi quidem laudabiliora videntur omnia, quæ sine venditatione, & sine populo teste fiunt* †; "all things truly "seem more laudable to me, that are performed without "ostentation, and without the testimony of the people." I had nothing to do but to preserve and to continue, which are silent and sensible effects. Innovation is of great

* Cicero de Fin. Bon. & Mal. lib. xi. cap. 15. † Cicero Tusc. Quæst. lib. ii. cap. 26.

lustre,

luſtre, but it is interdicted at this time, when we are preſſed upon, and have nothing to defend ourſelves from but novelties. To forbear doing, is often as generous as to do, but it is not ſo conſpicuous; and the little good I have in me is almoſt entirely of this kind. In fine, occaſions in this employment of mine, have been conſiſtent with my humour, and I thank them for it. Is there any one who deſires to be ſick for the ſake of ſeeing his phyſician employed? And ſhould not that phyſician be whipped, who wiſhed the plague amongſt us, that he might put his art in practice? I was never of that wicked humour, though common enough, to deſire that the trouble and diſorders of this city ſhould ſet off and do honour to my government; I heartily contributed all I could to their tranquility and eaſe. He who will not thank me for the order, the ſweet and ſilent calm that accompanied my adminiſtration, cannot however deprive me of the ſhare of it that belongs to me by the title of my good fortune. I am of ſuch a compoſition, that I would as willingly be happy as wiſe; and had rather owe my ſucceſſes purely to the favour of Almighty God, than to any operation of my own. I had ſufficiently publiſhed to the world my unfitneſs for ſuch public offices; but I have ſomething in me yet worſe than incapacity; which is, that I am not much diſpleaſed at it, and that I do not much go about to cure it, conſidering the courſe of life that I have propoſed to myſelf. Neither have I ſatisfied myſelf in this employment, but I have very near arrived at what I expected from my own performance, and yet have much ſurpaſſed what I promiſed them with whom I had to do: for I am apt to promiſe ſomething leſs than what I am able to perform, and than what I hope to make good. I aſſure myſelf that I have left no impreſſions of offence or hatred behind me, and that I will leave a regret or deſire of me amongſt them. I at leaſt know very well that I never much affected it.

——méne huic confidere monſtro,
Méne ſalis placidi vultum, fluctuſque quietos
Ignorare?*

Me doſt thou bid to truſt the treach'rous deep!
Her harlot ſmiles ſhall I believe again,
And oft betray'd, not know the monſter main?

CHAP. XI.

Of Cripples.

The year cut ten days ſhorter.

IT is now two or three years ago that they made the year ten days ſhorter in France. How many changes may we expect to follow this reformation? This was properly removing heaven and earth at once; and yet nothing ſtirs from its place: my neighbours ſtill find their ſeaſons of ſowing and reaping, and of trading, together with the lucky and unlucky days, juſt at the ſame inſtant, where they had time out of mind aſſigned them. There was no error perceived in our old uſage, nor is there amendment found in the new. So great an uncertainty there is throughout; ſo groſs, obſcure and dull is our perception! It is ſaid, that this regulation might have been carried on with leſs inconvenience, by ſubtracting for ſome years, according to the example of Auguſtus, the Biſſextile, which is upon the whole a day of hindrance and confuſion, till we had exactly ſatisfied that debt; which is not performed neither by this correction, and we yet remain ſome days in arrear: and ſurely by the ſame means care might be taken for the future, by ordering, that after the revolution of ſuch a year, or ſuch a number of years, this ſupernumerary day might be always eclipſed, ſo that we could not

* Virgil. Æneid. lib. v. ver. 849.

hence-

henceforward exceed four and twenty hours in our miſreckoning. We have no other account of time but years; the world has for many ages made uſe of that only, and yet it is a meaſure that to this day we have not fixed upon; ſuch a one, that we ſtill doubt what form other nations have variouſly given to it, and what was the true uſe of it. What does this ſaying of ſome mean, "that the heavens, in growing old, preſs nearer towards "us, and put us to an uncertainty even of hours and "days? And that which Plutarch ſays of the months, "that aſtrology had not, in his time, determined the "motion of the moon?" So, what a fine condition are we in to keep records of things paſt!

The vanity of the human underſtanding, which often ſeeks for the cauſes of a fact, before there is a certainty of ſuch fact.

I was juſt now ruminating, as I often do, what a free and roving thing human reaſon is. I ordinarily ſee, that men, in things propoſed to them, are more curious to find out the reaſon of a thing, than to find out the truth of it. They ſlip over ſuppoſitions, but nicely examine conſequences. They leave the things and fly to the cauſes. Pleaſant diſputants! The knowledge of cauſes only concerns him who has the conduct of things, not us, who are only to undergo them, and who have a full and complete uſe of them according to our need, without penetrating into their original and eſſence. Neither is wine more pleaſant to him that knows its firſt qualities. On the contrary, both the body and ſoul alter and interrupt the right they have of the uſe of the world, and of themſelves, by mixing with it in the opinion of learning. Effects concern us, but the means not at all. To determine and to diſtribute appertain to the ſuperior and the governor, as it does to the ſubject and the learner to accept it. Let me reſume our cuſtom. They commonly begin thus: "how is ſuch a thing done" Whereas they ſhould ſay, "is ſuch a thing done?" By our talk we are able to create an hundred other worlds, and to find out the beginnings and contexture; it needs neither matter nor foundation. Let the tongue

tongue run, it builds as well in a vacuum as on the earth; and with inanity as well as matter.

Dare pondus idonea fumo *.

And can give weight to ſmoke.

I find, that almoſt throughout we ſhould ſay, "there "is no ſuch thing;" and would myſelf oft make uſe of this anſwer, but I dare not; for they cry, it is a defect produced from ignorance and weakneſs of underſtanding. And I am forced, for the moſt part, to play the impertinent for company, and to prate of frivolous and idle ſubjects, of which I believe not a word. Beſides, in truth, it is a little rude flatly to deny a propoſition; and there are few people but will affirm, eſpecially in things hard to be believed, that they have ſeen them, or at leaſt will name ſuch witneſſes whoſe authority ſtops our contradiction. By this means we know the foundations and means of a thouſand things that never were; and the world ſcolds about a thouſand queſtions, of which the *pro* and *con* are both falſe. *Ita finitima ſunt falſa veris, ut in præcipitem locum non debeat ſe ſapiens committere* †; "falſe things are ſo like the true, "that a wiſe man ſhould not truſt himſelf upon the "precipice." Truth and lies have the ſame aſpect, their port, taſte, and paces, are the ſame, and we look upon them with the ſame eye. I find that we are not only remiſs in defending ourſelves from deceit, but we ſeek and offer ourſelves to be gulled; we love to entangle ourſelves in vanity, as a thing conformable to our being.

What credit falſe miracles have gained in the world.

I have ſeen the birth of many miracles of my time, which although they were ſtillborn, yet have we not failed to foreſee what they would have come to, had they lived. It is but finding the end of the clue, and a man may wind off as much as he will; and there is a greater diſtance

* Perſius, ſat. v. ver. 20. † Cicero Quæſt. Acad. lib. iv. cap. 21.

betwixt

betwixt nothing, and the minuteſt thing in the world, than there is betwixt that and the greateſt. Now, the firſt that are tinctured with this beginning of novelty, when they ſet out their hiſtory, find, by the oppoſition they meet with, where the difficulty of perſuaſion lies, and caulk that place with ſome falſe piece. Beſides that, *Inſita hominibus libidine alendi de induſtria rumores*; "men "having a natural luſt to propagate reports," we naturally make a conſcience of reſtoring what has been lent us, without ſome uſury and addition of our own invention. Private error firſt creates public error; and afterwards, in turn, public error cauſes a particular one; thus all this fabric riſes by patchwork from hand to hand, ſo that the remoteſt witneſs knows more than thoſe that are neareſt; and the laſt informed is more certain than the firſt. It is a natural progreſs: for whoever believes any thing, thinks it a work of charity to perſuade another into the ſame opinion. Which the better to do, he will make no difficulty of adding as much of his own invention, as he conceives neceſſary to obviate the reſiſtance or want of conception he ſuppoſes in others. I myſelf, who make a particular conſcience of lying, and am not very ſolicitous of gaining credit and authority to what I ſay, yet find, that in the arguments I have in hand, being warmed with the oppoſition of another, or by the proper heat of my own narration, I ſwell and puff up my ſubject by voice, motion, vigour, and force of words; and likewiſe by extention and amplification; not without prejudice to the naked truth: but I do it on condition nevertheleſs, that to the firſt who brings me to recollection and who aſks me the plain and real truth, I preſently ſurrender, and deliver it to him without exaggeration, without emphaſis, or any interlarding of my own. A quick and earneſt way of ſpeaking, as mine is, is apt to run into hyperbole. There is nothing to which men commonly are more inclined, than to give way to their own opinions. Where the ordinary means fail us, we add command and force, fire and ſword. It is a miſ-

fortune to be at that pass, that the best touchstone of the truth, must be the multitude of believers, in a crowd, where the number of fools so much exceeds the wise. *Quasi vero quidquam sit tam valde, quam nihil sapere, vulgare. Sanitatis patrocinium est, insanientium turba* *; "as "if any thing were so common as ignorance. The mob "of fools is a protection to the wise." It is hard for a man to form his judgment against the common opinions. The first persuasion taken of the very subject itself, possesses the simple, and from that it spreads to the wise, by the authority of the number and antiquity of the witnesses. For my part, what I would not believe from one, I would not believe from a hundred; and I do not judge of opinions by the years. If is not long since one of our princes, in whom the gout has spoiled an excellent natural genius, and sprightly disposition, suffered himself to be so far persuaded with the report of the wonderful operations of a certain priest, who by words and gestures cured all sorts of diseases, as to go a long journey to seek him out; and by the force of his apprehension for some time, so persuaded and laid his legs asleep for several hours as to obtain that service from them which they had a long time left off. Had fortune packed together five or six such accidents, it had been enough to have brought this miracle into nature. There was after this discovered so much simplicity, and so little art in the architect of such operations, that he was thought too contemptible to be punished; as would be the case of most such things, were they examined to the bottom. *Miramur ex intervallo fallentia* †; "we admire at things that deceive by their distance." So does our sight oft represent to us strange images at a distance, that vanish in approaching them near. *Nunquam ad liquidam fama perducitur* ‡; "fame never reports things in their true light.

A priest that cured all sorts of diseases by words and gestures.

* Cicero De div. lib. ii. cap. 39. Item Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. vi. cap. 10. † Senec. ep. 118. ‡ Qu. Curtius lib. ix. cap. 2.

It

How it comes to be so difficult a matter to be convinced that a miracle is false.

It is to be wondered at, from how many idle beginnings and frivolous causes such famous impressions commonly proceed. This it is that obstructs the information; for whilst we seek out the causes, and the great and weighty ends, worthy of so great a name, we lose the true ones. They escape our sight by their littleness: and, in truth, a prudent, diligent, and subtle enquirer is necessary in such searches; one who is indifferent and not prepossessed.

What Montaigne thought the clearest of miracles.

To this very hour all these miracles and strange events have concealed themselves from me; I have never seen a more evident monster or miracle in the world than myself: a man grows familiar with all strange things by time and custom; but the more I visit, and the better I know myself, the more does my own deformity astonish me, and the less I understand of myself.

Story of a miracle's very near gaining credit though built on a very weak foundation.

The chief prerogative of advancing and producing such accidents, is reserved to fortune. Riding the other day through a village, about two leagues from my house, I found the place yet hot with the rumour of a miracle lately wrought there, wherewith the neighbourhood had been several months amused, so that neighbouring provinces began to take the alarm, and there was a vast concourse to it of all sorts of people. A young fellow of the town, had one night counterfeited the voice of a spirit in his own house, without any other design, but only for present sport; but this having succeeded with him a little better than he expected, in order to illustrate his farce with more actors, he took a stupid silly country girl into the scene, and at last they were three of the same age and understanding, who from domestic lectures, proceeded to public preaching, hiding themselves under the altar of the church, never speaking but by night, and forbidding any light to be brought. From words which tended to the conversion of the world, and threats of the day of judgment (for these are subjects under the authority and reverence of which imposture lies

moſt ſecurely concealed) they proceeded to viſions and geſtures, ſo ſimple and ridiculous, that nothing could hardly be ſo groſs in the diverſion of little children: yet had fortune never ſo little favoured the deſign, who knows to what height this juggling might have at laſt arrived? Theſe poor devils are at preſent in priſon, and are like to pay for their impoſition on the public, and I know not whether ſome judge may not alſo make them ſmart for impoſing on him. We ſee clearly in this which is diſcovered; but in many things of the like nature, that exceed our knowledge, I am of opinion, that we ought to ſuſpend our judgment, and to keep it in a ſtate as fit to reject as to receive them.

The foundation of all the impoſtures in the world.

Great abuſe, or, to ſpeak more boldly, all the abuſes of the world are begot by our being taught to be afraid of profeſſing our ignorance, and from our being bound to accept whatever we are not able to confute. We ſpeak of all things by precepts and deciſion. The ſtyle of Rome was, that even that which a witneſs depoſed he had ſeen with his own eyes, and what a judge determined from his moſt certain knowledge, was couched in this form of ſpeaking, "it ſeems". They make me hate things that are likely, when they impoſe them upon me for infallible. I love thoſe words which mollify and moderate the temerity of our propoſitions, "perhaps, in "ſome ſort, ſome ſay, I think," and the like: and had I been to train up children, I would have ſo familiariſed them to the interrogatory and not peremptory way of anſwering, "what does this mean? I underſtand it not; it may be; is it true;" that they ſhould rather have retained the form of pupils at threeſcore years old, than to go out doctors at ten, as they now do. Whoever will be cured of ignorance, muſt confeſs it.

A kind of ignorance much to be eſteemed.

Iris is the daughter of Thaumantis; admiration is the foundation of all philoſophy, inquiry the progreſs, and ignorance the end. Nay in truth, there is a ſort of ignorance ſtrong and generous, that yields nothing in honour and courage to knowledge; an ignorance, of which to conceive,

ceive, requires no leſs knowledge than to conceive of knowledge itſelf. I ſay in my younger years, a proceſs which Corras a counſellor of Tholouſe publiſhed, of a ſtrange accident of two men, who preſented themſelves the one for the other. I remember (and I hardly remember any thing ſo well) that he ſeemed to have rendered the impoſture of him whom he judged to be guilty, ſo wonderful, and ſo far exceeding both our knowledge and his own, who was the judge, that I thought it a very bold ſentence which condemned him to be hanged. Let us take up ſome form of arreſt, that ſays, "the court underſtands nothing of the matter;" more freely and ingenuouſly than the Areopagites did, who finding themſelves perplexed with a cauſe they could not unravel, ordered the parties to appear again after an hundred years.

Whether from the miracles reported in the ſacred ſcriptures any thing can be inferred in favour of ſuch modern events.

The witches of my neighbourhood run a hazard of their lives, upon the intelligence of every new author, that gives a real ſubſtance to their dreams. To accommodate the examples that holy writ gives us of ſuch things, examples that are moſt certain and irrefragable, and to make our modern events of the ſame kind, as we neither ſee their cauſes nor their means, will require another ſort of wit than ours. It perhaps only appertains to that moſt potent teſtimony, to tell us, "this is true, and that is "true, and not that other." God ought to be believed, and certainly with very good reaſon; but not one amongſt us, for all that, who is aſtoniſhed at his own narration, (and he muſt of neceſſity be aſtoniſhed, if he be not out of his wits) whether he employ it in the caſe of another, or againſt himſelf.

As to witches Montaigne refuſed to determine any thing, and treated moſt of the ſtories concerning them as chimæras.

I am plain and blunt, and am inclined to that which is ſolid and more likely, avoiding thoſe ancient reproaches, *Majorem fidem homines adhibent eis quæ non intelligunt. Cupidine humani ingenii libentius obſcura creduntur* *; "men are moſt apt to

* Tacit. Hiſt. lib. i. cap. 22.

"believe obscure things and what they least under-"stand." I see very well that men are angry, and that I am forbidden to doubt upon pain of execrable injuries. A new way of persuading! God forgive them. I am not to be cufft into belief. Let them be angry with those that accuse their opinion of falsity, I only accuse it of difficulty and boldness; and condemn the opposite affirmation equally with them, though not so imperiously. He who establishes his argument by authority and hectoring, discovers his reason to be weak. for a verbal and scholastic altercation, let them have as much appearance as their contradictors. *Videantur sanè, non affirmentur modò* *; "be the things that are advanced "probable, well and good; provided they are not ab-"solutely affirmed." But in the real consequence they draw from it, these have much the advantage. To convince men, a clear and shining light is required. Our life is too real and essential a thing to warrant those supernatural and fantastic accidents. As to drugs and poisons, I throw them out of my account, as being the worst sorts of homicide: yet even in this, it is said, that men are not always to insist upon the proper confessions of these people; for men have sometimes been known to accuse themselves of the murder of persons who have afterwards been found living and well. In these other extravagant accusations, I would be apt to say, it is sufficient that a man, what recommendation soever he may have, be believed in human things; but of what is beyond his conception, and of a supernatural effect, he ought then only to be believed, when it is authorized by a supernatural approbation. The privilege it has pleased God to give to some of our testimonies, ought not to be lightly communicated and made cheap. I have my ears battered with a thousand such flim-flams as these. "Three saw him "such a day in the east; three the next day in the west; at "such an hour, in such a place, and in such a habit." In earnest, I would not take my own word for it. How much more natural and likely do I find it that two men

* Cit. Acad. Quæst. lib. iv. cap. 27.

should

ſhould live, than that one man, in twelve hours time, ſhould fly with the wind from eaſt to weſt? How much more natural, that our underſtanding ſhould be perverted by the volubility of our diſordered minds, than it is that one of us ſhould be carried, by a ſtrange ſpirit, upon a broomſtick, fleſh and bones, as we are, up the ſhaft of a chimney? Let us not ſeek deluſions that are external and unknown, we who are perpetually agitated with deluſions that are domeſtic and our own. Methinks a man is pardonable in diſbelieving a miracle, as far at leaſt as he can divert and expunge the verification of it by no wonderful ways. And I am of St. Auguſtine's opinion, that it is better to lean towards doubt than aſſurance, in things hard to prove, and dangerous to believe. It is now ſome years ago, that I travelled through the territories of a ſovereign prince, who, in my favour, and to abate my incredulity, did me the honour to let me ſee, in his own preſence, and in a particular place, ten or twelve priſoners of this kind: and amongſt others, an old hag, a real witch in naſtineſs and deformity, who long had been famous in that profeſſion. I ſaw both proofs and free confeſſions, and I know not what unaccountable mark upon this miſerable old creature: I examined and talked with her, and the reſt, as much and as long as I would, and gave the utmoſt attention I could; neither am I a man to ſuffer my judgment to be captivated by prepoſſeſſion; but upon the whole in my conſcience I would ſooner have preſcribed them hellebore then hemlock. *Captiſque res magis mentibus, quam conſceleratis ſimilis viſa* *; "the thing ſeemed rather to be attributed to madneſs than malice." Juſtice has correction proper for ſuch maladies. As to the oppoſitions and arguments that I have met with from honeſt men, both there and oft in other places, I have found none that have convinced me, and that have not admitted a more likely ſolution than their concluſions.

Witch-marks.

* Livius.

It is true indeed, that as to proofs and reasons that are founded upon experience and matter of fact, I do not unhinge them, neither have they any end. I often cut them, as Alexander did the Gordion knot. After all, it is setting a man's conjectures up at a very high price, to cause a man to be roasted alive for them.

He is induced to think that witches are crack-brained; but does not pretend that his word should be taken for it.

We are told by several examples (and particularly by Præstantius * of his father) that being more drowned in sleep than men generally are, he fancied himself to be a beast of burthen, and that he served the soldiers for a sumpter-horse; and what he fancied himself to be, he really proved. If witches dream so materially; if dreams can sometimes so incorporate themselves in the effects, I cannot believe that therefore our wills should be accountable to justice; which I say, as a man, who am neither judge nor privy-counsellor; and who think myself by many degrees unworthy so to be, but a man of the common sort born, and devoted to the obedience of the public reason, both in his words and actions. He that would quote my whimsies to the prejudice of the most paltry law, opinion, and custom of his parish, would do himself a great deal of wrong, and me much more. For in what I say, I warrant no other certainty, but that it is what I had then in my thought. Confused

* After a fruitless search to find out who were this Præstantius and his father, I was informed by M. de la Monnoye, whom nothing escapes. He referred me to the tract de Civitate Dei, lib. xviii. cap. 18. where St. Austin reports the fact as follows, viz. One Præstantius said, that his father having eaten some cheese in which there had been a spell, slept several days in his bed so sound that none could awake him, till the lethargy going off, he told the visions he had had, viz. that he was turned into a horse, and that in this shape he had served the soldiers for a sumpter-horse, which, says St. Austin, actually happened as he related it. The holy father is of opinion, that in cases of this sort the devil presents to the spectators a visionary body which they take for a real animal, a horse, an ass, &c. and that the man who imagines himself to be that ass, or that horse, thinks he carries a real burden, as much as it was possible for him to fancy it in a dream; so that if such phantom of an animal carries real bodies, they are the Dæmons who carry them in order to deceive men, who then see real bodies or the back of a sumpter-horse, which is a mere phantom.

and

and wavering thought. All I say is by way of discourse, and nothing by way of advice. *Nec me pudet, ut istos, fateri nescire, quod nesciam* *: "neither am I ashamed, "as they are, to confess my ignorance of what I do not "know." I would not speak so boldly, if it were my due to be believed. And so I told a great man, who complained of the tartness of my exhortations. Perceiving you to be positive on one side of the question, I propose to you the other, with all the care I can, to clear your judgment, not to bind it. God has your heart in his hands, and will furnish you with the choice. I am not so presumptuous as to desire that my opinions should bias you in a thing of so great importance. My fortune has not trained them up to such potent and sublime conclusions. Truly I have not only a great many humours, but also a great many opinions, that I would endeavour to make my son dislike, if I had one. Why? even the truest are not always the most commodious to man, he is of so wild a composition.

Reflection on a very odd proverb.

Whether it be to the purpose, or not, it is no great matter. It is a common proverb in Italy, "that he knows not all "the pleasures of Venus to perfection, who has never "lain with a cripple." Fortune, or some particular accident, has long ago put this saying into the mouths of the people; and the same is said of the men as well as of women; for the queen of the Amazons answered a Scythian who courted her to love, ἄρισα χολὸς οἰφεῖ, "lame men perform best." In that feminine republic, to evade the dominion of the males, they lamed them in their infancy, in their arms, legs, and the other joints that gave them advantage over the females, and only made use of them in that affair wherein we in these parts of the world make use of the sex. I would have been apt to think that the wriggling motion of the lame mistress added some new pleasure to the affair, and a certain titillation to those who are engaged in it; but I have

Lame people best at the sport of Venus.

* Cicero Tusc. Quæst. lib. i. cap. 25.

lately

lately learnt, that ancient philoſophy has itſelf determined it, which ſays, that the legs and thighs of lame perſons, not receiving, by reaſon of their imperfection, their due aliment, it falls out, that the genital parts above, are fuller, better ſupplied, and more vigorous. Or elſe, that this defect hindering exerciſe, they who ſuffer it are at leſs expence of their ſpirits, and come more entire to the ſports of Venus; which alſo is the reaſon why the Greeks decried the women weavers, as being more hot than other women, by reaſon of the ſedentary occupation, which they have without any great exerciſe of the body. What is it we may not reaſon of at this rate? I might alſo ſay of theſe, that this jogging on their ſeats, whilſt they are at work, rouzes and provokes their deſire, as the ſwinging and jolting of their coaches does that of our ladies of quality.

Women weavers more luſtful than other women.

Do not theſe examples ſerve to make good what I ſaid at firſt, that our reaſons often anticipate the effect, and have ſo infinite an extent of juriſdiction, that they judge and exerciſe themſelves, even in inanity and non-exiſtence? Beſides, the flexibility of our invention to forge reaſons for all ſorts of dreams, our imagination is equally ready to receive impreſſions of falſity, by very frivolous appearances. For by the ſole authority of the ancient and common uſe of this proverb, I have formerly made myſelf believe, that I have had the more pleaſure with a woman by reaſon ſhe was not ſtrait, and accordingly reckoned that deformity amongſt her graces.

The mind of man forges the moſt chimærical reaſons.

Torquato Taſſo *, in the compariſon he makes betwixt France and Italy, ſays, he has obſerved, that our legs are generally ſmaller than thoſe of the Italian gentlemen: and attributes the cauſe of it to our being continually on horſeback. The very thing from which Suetonius † draws a concluſion that is directly oppoſite;

Contrary cauſes aſſigned to one and the ſame effect.

* Paragone dell' Italia alla Francia, p. 11.

† Suetonius, in vita Caligulæ, § 3.

for

for he says on the contrary, that Germanicus had made his legs bigger by the continuation of the same exercise. Nothing is so supple and wandering as our understanding. It is like the shoe of Theramenes, fit for all feet. It is double and various, as are also the subjects. "Give me a "dram-weight of silver," said a Cynic philosopher to Antigonus; "that is too little for a king to give," replied he; "give me then a talent;" said the other; "and that," said the king, "is too much "for a Cynic "to ask *."

Theramenes shoe.

Seu plures calor ille vias, et cæca relaxat
Spiramenta, novas veniat qua succus in herbas;
Seu durat magis, et venas astringit hiantes,
Ne tenues pluviæ, rapidive potentia solis
Acrior, aut Boreæ penetrabile frigus adurat †.

Virgil says, it is often proper to set fire to the fields, and to burn the useless stubble.

Whether the heat the gaping ground constrains,
New knits the surface, and new strings the veins;
Lest soaking showr's should pierce her secret seat,
Or freezing Boreas chill her genial heat,
Or scorching suns too violently beat.

Ogni medaglia ha ill suo reverso ‡; "every medal has its "reverse." This is the reason why Clitomachus said of old, that Carneades had out-done the labours of Hercules, in having eradicated from the mind of man, its obstinacy and rashness of judging. This so strong fancy of Carneades, sprung, in my opinion, anciently from the impudence of those who made profession of knowledge, and their unbounded self-conceit. Æsop was set to sale with two other slaves; the buyer asked the first,

* Seneca de Benef. lib. ii. cap. 17. † Virg. Geor. lib. i. ver. 89, &c. ‡ Cicero Acad. Quæst. lib. iv. cap. 34.

"what

"what he could do;" who, to enhance his own value, promiſed mountains and miracles, ſaying, "he could "do this, and that, and I know not what;" the ſecond boaſted as much of himſelf and more: when it came to Æſop's turn, and that he was alſo aſked, "what he "could do?" "Nothing," ſaid he, "for theſe two "have taken up all before me; they can do every thing." So has it happened in the ſchool of philoſophy. The pride of thoſe who attributed a capacity for all things to human underſtanding, created in others, out of ſpite and emulation, this opinion, that it is capable of nothing. The one maintains the ſame extreme in ignorance as the others do in knowledge; ſo that it is undeniable, that man is immoderate throughout, and can never ſtop but from neceſſity, and the want of ability to proceed further.

CHAP. XII.

Of Phyſignomy.

We admire the diſcourſes of Socrates out of pure reſpect to the public approbation, without diſcerning the true value of them.

ALMOST all the opinions we have are derived from authority, and taken upon truſt; and it is not amiſs. We could not chuſe worſe than by ourſelves in ſo weak an age. The repreſentation of Socrates's diſcourſes, which his friends have tranſmitted to us, we approve upon no other account, but merely the reverence to public approbation. It is not according to our knowledge; they are not after our way. If any thing of this kind ſhould ſpring up now, few men would value them. We diſcern not the beauties otherwiſe than by certain features, touched up, and illuſtrated by art. Such as glide on in their own genuine ſimplicity, eaſily eſcape ſo groſs a ſight as ours; they have a delicate and concealed beauty, and it requires the cleareſt ſight to diſcover ſo ſecret a light. Is not ſimplicity, in the ſenſe we accept

accept it, couſin-german to folly, and a quality of reproach? Socrates makes his ſoul move by a natural and common motion. "A peaſant ſaid this, a woman "ſaid that;" he never has any thing in his mouth, but carters, joiners, coblers, and maſons. They are inductions and ſimilitudes drawn from the moſt common and known actions of men; every one underſtands them. We would never have conceived the nobility and ſplendor of his admirable conceptions under ſo vile a form; we, I ſay, who think all things low and flat, that are not elevated by learning, and who diſcern no riches but in pomp and ſhow. This world is only formed for oſtentation. Men are only pufft up with wind, and are bandied to and fro like tennis-balls. This man propoſed to himſelf no vain fancies; his deſign was to furniſh us with precepts and things that are really and moſt immediately of ſervice to life.

——— *ſervare modum, finemque tenere,*
Naturamque ſequi *.

To keep a mean, his end ſtill to obſerve,
And from the laws of nature ne'er to ſwerve.

He was alſo always one and the ſame, and raiſed himſelf not by ſtarts, but by conſtitution, to the higheſt pitch of vigour; or to ſay better, he exalted nothing, but rather brought down and reduced all aſperities and difficulties to their original and natural condition, and ſubjected their power: for in Cato it is moſt manifeſt, that this is a pace extended far above the common ways of men. In the brave exploits of his life, and in his death, we find him always mounted upon his managed horſes. Whereas this man always ſkims the ground, and with a gentle and ordinary pace, delivers the moſt uſeful diſcourſes, and bears himſelf up through

* Lucan. lib, ii. ver. 381, 382.

the

the moſt crabbed difficulties that could occur in the courſe of human live even to death.

The character of Socrates, as it is given us by the moſt faithful and the cleareſt evidence.

It has fallen out well, that the man moſt worthy to be known, and to be preſented to the world for example, is he of whom we have the moſt certain knowledge; for he has been pried into by the moſt clear-ſighted men that ever were. The teſtimonies we have of him are admirable both for their number and credit. It is a great thing that he was able ſo to order the pure imaginations of a child, that without altering or wreſting them, he has thereby produced the moſt beautiful effects of a human ſoul. He preſents it neither elevated nor rich, he only repreſents it ſound, but certainly with a briſk and pure health. By theſe common and natural ſprings, by theſe vulgar and ordidinary fancies, without being moved or provoked in the buſineſs, he drew up, not only the moſt regular, but the moſt high and vigorous beliefs, actions, and manners that ever were. It is he who brought again from heaven, where ſhe loſt time, human wiſdom, to reſtore her to man, with whom her moſt juſt and greateſt buſineſs lies. See him plead before his judges, do but obſerve by what reaſons he rouzes his courage to the hazards of war; with what arguments he fortifies his patience againſt calumny, tyranny, death, and the perverſeneſs of his wife: you will find nothing in all this borrowed from art and the ſciences. The ſimpleſt may therefore diſcover their own means and power; it is impoſſible to retire further, or to creep more low. He has done human nature a great favour in ſhewing how much it can do of itſelf.

Man incapable of moderation even with regard to ſcience.

We are all of us richer than we think we are; but we are taught to borrow and to beg, and brought up more to make uſe of what is another's than our own. Man can in nothing ſet bounds to his neceſſity. Of pleaſure, wealth, and power, he graſps at more than he can hold; his greedineſs is incapable of moderation. And I find, that in the curioſity of knowing

knowing he is the same; he cuts himself out more work than he can execute, and more than he needs to perform: extending the utility of knowledge as far as the matter. *Ut omnium rerum, sic literarum quoque, intemperantia laboramus* *; "as of every thing else, we are intemperate "in the pursuit of learning." Tacitus had reason to commend the mother † of Agricola, for having restrained her son in his too violent appetite for learning.

Learning is a dangerous acquisition. That which is of absolute use is in us by nature.

It is a good, if duly considered, which has in it, as the other goods of men have, a great deal of vanity, and of proper and natural weakness, and which costs very dear; the acquisition of it is more hazardous than that of all other sustenance. For in other things, what we have bought, we carry home in some vessel, and there have liberty to examine the worth of it, how much and at what time we shall take it; but the sciences we can bestow into no other vessel than the soul; we swallow them in buying, and return from the market, either already infected, or amended. There are such sorts as only burthen and clog us instead of nourishing; and moreover, some that, under colour of curing, poison us. I have been pleased, in places where I have been, to see men through devotion make a vow of ignorance as well as chastity, poverty, and penitence. It is as it were a gelding of our unruly appetites to blunt this curiosity that spurs us on to the study of books; and to deprive the soul of this voluptuous complacency, that tickles us through our opinion of knowledge. It is fully accomplishing the vow of poverty to add unto it that also of the mind. We need not be taught to live at our ease. Socrates tells us, that the way how to attain to it, and the manner how to use it are in our power. All this sufficiency of ours, which exceeds the natural, is little better than superfluous and vain. It is much if it does not more encumber and plague us than do us good. *Paucis opus est literis ad mentem bonam* ‡; "a man of a good dis-"position, has little need of learning." It is a feverish

* Senec. epist. 106.
† Tacit. in the life of Jul. Agricolæ, § 4.
‡ Senec. epist. 105.

exceſs of the mind; a turbulent and reſtleſs tool. Do but look into yourſelf, and you will find there ſuch natural arguments againſt death, as are true, and the moſt proper to ſerve you in neceſſity. They are ſuch as make a peaſant, and an entire people die with as much conſtancy as a philoſopher. Would I have died leſs chearfully before I had read Cicero's *Tuſculanes?* I believe not. And when I conſider ſeriouſly, I perceive that my language is enriched indeed, but my courage little or nothing. It is juſt as nature forged it, and in any conflict, only defends itſelf in a natural and ordinary way. Books have not ſo much ſerved me for inſtruction as for exerciſe. What if learning, trying to arm us with new defences againſt natural inconveniences, has more imprinted in our fancies the weight and greatneſs of them, than its reaſons and ſubtilties to ſecure us from them? They are ſubtilties indeed, with which it oft alarms us to little purpoſe. Do but obſerve, how many frivolous, and if nearly examined, how many immaterial arguments the moſt conciſe and the wiſeſt authors ſcatter about one that is good. They are no other than quirks to deceive us. But as this may be with ſome profit, I will ſift them no further. Enough of that ſort are diſperſed up and down, either by borrowing, or by imitation: therefore ought a man to take a little heed, not to call that force which is only civility, nor that ſolid which is only ſharp, or that good which is only fair. *Quæ magis guſtata quam potata delectant* *; "which more delight the palate than "the ſtomach. Every thing that flatters does not feed." *Ubi non ingenii, ſed animi negotium agitur* †; "where the "queſtion is not about improving the wit, but the "underſtanding."

Seneca's great efforts in preparing for his death.

To ſee the buſtle that Seneca makes to fortify himſelf againſt death, to ſee him ſo ſweat and pant to harden and encourage himſelf, and bait ſo long upon this perch, would have leſſened his reputation with me, had he not very bravely maintained it to the laſt. His ſo ardent and frequent agitations diſcover, that he was in himſelf hot and

* Tuſc. lib. 1. cap. 5. † Senec. epiſt. 75.

impe-

impetuous. *Magnus animus remissius loquitur, et securius: non est alius ingenio, alius animo color* *; "a great courage speaks more indifferently and more firmly; the mind and the heart are of the same livery." He must be convinced at his own expence. And he in some sort discovers that he was hard pressed by his enemy.

Plutarch's manner the more disdainful, and the more lax it is, is, in my opinion, the more manly and persuasive; I am apt to believe, that his soul had more certain and more regular motions. The one being more sharp, pricks and makes us start, and more touches the soul; the other being more solid, informs, establishes, and constantly supports us, and more touches the understanding. That extorts the judgment, this wins it. I have likewise seen other writings yet more reverenced than these, which in the representation of the conflict they maintain against the temptations of the flesh, depict them so sharp, so powerful and invincible, that we ourselves, who are of the dregs of the people, are as much to wonder at the strangeness and unknown force of their temptation, as at their resistance.

Plutarch is more loose in this point, and for that very reason more persuasive.

To what end do we so arm ourselves with these maxims of philosophy? let us look down upon the poor people that we see scattered upon the face of the earth, wholly intent upon their business, that neither know Aristole nor Cato, example nor precept. Even from these nature every day extracts effects of constancy and patience, more pure and manly than those we so diligently study in the schools. How many do I ordinarily see, who slight poverty? How many that desire to die, or that do it without alarm or affliction? He that is now digging in my garden, has this morning buried his father or his son. The very names by which they call diseases sweeten and mollify the sharpness of

The resolution of the vulgar in facing the most fatal accidents of life and even death itself, more instructive than the lectures of the philosophers.

* Sen. Epist. 114, 115.

them. The phthyſic is with them but a cough, the bloody-flux but a looſeneſs, a pleuriſy but a ſtitch, and as they gently name them, ſo they patiently endure them. They are grievous indeed, when they hinder their ordinary labour; and they never keep their beds but to die. *Simplex illa, et aperta virtus in obſcuram, et ſolertem ſcientiam verſa eſt* *; "that plain and ſimple virtue is converted into an obſcure and cunning knowledge."

Montaigne's account of the terrible calamities of the civil war in which he was involved.

I was writing this about the time when a heavy load of our inteſtine troubles lay with all its weight upon me for ſeveral months. I had the enemy at my door on one ſide, and the free-booters, worſe enemies than they, on the other; *non armis ſed vitiis certatur*; "I was attacked not by force of arms, but fraud;" by which I was expoſed to all ſorts of military injuries at once.

Hoſtis adeſt dextrâ, lævâque ex parti timendus,
Vicinoque malo terret utrumque latus †.

On either hand an enemy alarms,
And threatens both ſides with deſtructive arms.

A monſtrous war! other wars are bent againſt foreign nations, this againſt itſelf; and preys upon and deſtroys itſelf with its own poiſon. It is of ſo malignant and ruinous a nature, that it ruins itſelf with the reſt; and with rage mangles and tears itſelf to pieces. We oftner ſee it waſte itſelf, than through ſcarcity of any neceſſaries, or by force of the enemy. All diſcipline ſhuns it. It comes to compoſe ſedition, and is itſelf full of it; aims to chaſtiſe diſobedience, and itſelf gives the example; and, while employed for the defence of the laws, ſhares in rebellion againſt its own. What a condition are we in! our very phyſic is a plague.

* Sen. Epiſt. 95. † Ovid. de Ponto. lib. i. eleg. 3. ver. 57. 58.

Noſtre

Noſtre mal s'empoiſonne
Du ſecours qu'on luy donne *.

Such is our fate, that our diſeaſe
Our remedies do ſtill increaſe.

——*Exuperat magis, ægreſcitque medendo* †.

The phyſic makes us worſe, and ſicker ſtill.

Omnia fanda nefanda malo permiſta furore,
Juſtificam nobis mentem avertêre deorum ‡.

Right and wrong confounded in this war,
Have robb'd us of the gods protecting care.

In the beginning of ſuch popular maladies, a man may diſtinguiſh the ſound from the ſick; but when they come to continue, as ours have done, the whole body is then infected from head to foot, and no part is free from corruption. For there is no air that men ſo greedily ſuck in, that diffuſes itſelf ſo far, and that penetrates ſo deep as that of licentiouſneſs. Our armies only ſubſiſt, and are kept together by the cement of foreigners; for of French there is now no conſtant and regular body of an army to be made. What a ſhame it is? there is ſcarce any diſcipline but what we learn from hired ſoldiers. As for our parts we conduct ourſelves not at the diſcretion of the chief ||, but every one at his own; the general has a harder taſk to perform within than he has without: the commander alone is obliged to follow the ſoldiers, to make court to them, to comply with their humours, to obey them, and in every other regard there is nothing in the armies but diſſolution and licentiouſneſs. It pleaſes me to obſerve how much puſillanimity and cowardice

* Plutarch. † Virg. Æneid. lib. xii. ver. 46. ‡ Catullus Carm. 62. de Nuptiis Pelei et Thetidis, ver. 408. || Here the ingenious Mr. Cotton quite miſtook the ſentiment of his author.

there is in ambition; by how abject and ſervile ways it muſt arrive at its end; but beſides, it diſpleaſes me to ſee good and courteous natures, and that are capable of juſtice, every day corrupted in the management and command of this confuſion. Long toleration begets habit, habit conſent and imitation. We had ſouls miſchievous enough, without ſpoiling thoſe that were good and generous; ſo that if we hold on, there will ſcarce remain any with whom to intruſt the weal of the ſtate, in caſe fortune reſtore it to us.

Hunc ſaltem everſo juvenem ſuccurrere ſeclo,
Ne prohibete *.

Stay not the ſuccour which we all implore,
But let this *Youth* the ſinking age reſtore †.

What is become of the old precept, "That ſoldiers "ought to ſtand more in awe of their chief than of their "enemy?" And that wonderful example, that an orchard being encloſed within the precincts of a camp of the *Roman* army, was at their decampment next day left entire to the owner, and not an apple, though ripe and delicious, pulled off? I could wiſh that our youth, inſtead of the time they ſpend in leſs uſeful travels, and leſs honourable ſtudies, would beſtow one half of that time in being eye-witneſſes of naval exploits under ſome good commander of Malta, and the other half in obſerving the diſcipline of the Turkiſh armies, which is very different from and has many advantages over ours. One thing is, that

An orchard of ripe apples incloſed within the Roman camp, left untouched to the poſſeſſor.

* Virg. Geor. lib. i. v. 500.

† If I am not miſtaken the perſon here meant by Montaigne is Henry of Bourbon, king of Navarre, who ſucceeded to the crown of France by the death of Henry III. not only ſaved the government, which he had aſſiſted in the life-time of that prince, but rendered it more flouriſhing and formidable, than it had been for a long time.

our

our ſoldiers are become more licentious in expeditions, whereas theirs are more temperate, and kept more in awe. The thefts and inſolencies committed upon the common people, which are only puniſhed with the baſtinado in peace, are capital in war. For an egg taken in Turkey without paying for it, fifty blows with a cudgel is the ſettled rate; for any thing elſe, how trivial ſoever, not neceſſary to nouriſhment, they are impaled, or beheaded without delay. I am aſtoniſhed to read in the hiſtory of Selim, the moſt cruel conqueror that ever was, that when he ſubdued Egypt, the beautiful gardens about the city of Damaſcus being all open, (and in a conquered land, where his army encamped upon the very place) were left untouched by the hands of the ſoldiers, becauſe they had not received the ſignal for plunder.

Whether any thing can warrant the commiſſion of violence in a country, under pretence of correcting the abuſes of its government.

But is there any diſeaſe in a government ſo important, as ought to be purged with ſuch a mortal drug? "No, ſays Favonius, "not ſo much as the tyrannical uſurpa-"tion of a commonwealth." Plato likewiſe does not conſent, that a man ſhould violate the peace of his country to cure it; and by no means approves of a reformation that diſturbs and hazards all, and that is purchaſed at the price of the ſubject's blood and ruin; determining it to be the duty of a patriot, in ſuch a caſe, to let all alone, and only pray to God for his extraordinary aſſiſtance; and the philoſopher ſeems to be angry with his great friend Bion, for having proceeded ſomething after another manner. I was a Platonic in this point, before I knew there had ever been ſuch a man as Plato in the world. And if this perſon ought abſolutely to be rejected from our ſociety; (he who, by the ſincerity of his conſcience, merited ſo much of the divine favour as to penetrate ſo far into the chriſtian light, through the univerſal darkneſs wherein the world was involved in his time), I do not think it would well become us to ſuffer ourſelves to be inſtructed by a heathen, what a great impiety it is, not to expect from God relief that is ſimply his own, and without our co-operation. I often doubt,

whether, among so many men as tamper in such affairs, there is not to be found some one of so weak understanding as to have been really persuaded that he went towards reformation by the worst of deformations, and advanced towards his salvation by the most express causes which we know of most assured damnation; that by overthrowing government, magistracy, and the laws, in whose protection God has placed him, by inspiring fraternal minds with hatred, and parricide, and by calling devils and furies to his aid, he can assist the sacred lenity and justice of the divine law. Ambition, avarice, cruelty, and revenge, have not sufficient natural impetuosity; though we gloss them with the glorious titles of justice and devotion. There cannot a worse state of things be imagined, than where wickedness comes to be legitimate, and with the magistrates permission, puts on the cloak of virtue. *Nihil in speciem fallacius, quam prava religio, ubi deorum numen prætenditur sceleribus* *; "nothing has "a more deceiving face than a false religion, where wickedness is cloaked with the name of the gods." The most extreme injustice, according to Plato, is, when that which is unjust is reputed for just.

The pillage to which Montaigne was exposed on both sides.

The common people at that time suffered thereby very much, not present damages only,

——undique totis
Usque adeò turbatur agris †,——

So great disturbance reigns throughout the land.

but future too. The living were to suffer, and so were they who were yet unborn. They were robbed, as I was consequently, even of hopes; taking from them all they had, and robbed of the store laid up to live on for many years.

* Tit. Livius, lib. xxxix. cap. 16. † Virgil. Eleg. lib. 1. ver. 11.

Quæ

Quæ nequeunt secum ferre aut abducere, perdunt,
Et cremat insontes turba scelesta casas.
Muris nulla fides, squallent populatibus agri *.

What they can't carry off they spoil and spurn,
And the rude rabble harmless houses burn;
Walls can't secure their masters, and the field
Thro' woful waste does a vile prospect yield.

Besides this shock I suffered others. I underwent the inconveniencies that moderation brings along with it in such diseases. I was pilled on all hands, to the Gibelin I wa a Guelph, and to the Guelph a Gibelin; some one of the poets in my study expresses this very well, but I know not where it is. The situation of my house, and my acquaintance with my neighbours, presented me with one face; my life and my actions with another. They did not form accusations against me, for they had no fault to find. I never brake the laws, and whoever would have questioned me, would have done himself a greater prejudice than me. They were only suspicions that were whispered about, which never want appearance in so confused a mixture, no more than envious or weak brains. I commonly myself lend a hand to the injurious presumptions that fortune scatters abroad against me, by a way I have ever had of evading to justify, excuse, and explain myself, conceiving that it were to refer my conscience to arbitration, to plead in its behalf; *Perspicuitas enim argumentatione elevatur* †; "for the peripicuity of "a cause is clouded by argumentation." And, as if every one saw as clearly into me as I do myself, instead of retiring from an accusation, I advance to meet it, and rather aggravate it by an ironical and scoffing confession, if I do not totally despise it, as a thing not worth my answer. But such as look upon this kind of behaviour as be-

* Ovid. Trist. lib. iii. el. 10. ver. 65.
† Cicero de Nat. Deorum. lib. iii. cap. 4.

traying too haughty a confidence, have as little kindness for me as they who interpret it to be the weakness of an indefensible cause; namely the great ones, towards whom want of submission is a very great fault; they being rude to all justice that knows and feels itself, and is not submissive, humble, and suppliant. I have oft knocked my head against this pillar. So it is, that at what then befel me an ambitious man would have hanged himself, and a covetous one would have done the same. I have no manner of care of getting.

Sit mihi, quod nunc est, etiam minus, ut mihi vivam
Quod superest ævi, si quid superesse volunt Dî *.

I only pray, that small estate which I
Now have, may tarry with me till I die,
And those few days which I have yet to live
(If heav'n to me more days will please to give)
I may enjoy myself.

But the losses that have befallen me by the injury of others, whether by theft or violence, go as near to my heart almost, as they would do to that of a man that was sick and tortured with avarice. The offence is, without comparison, more bitter than the loss. A thousand several sorts of mischiefs fell upon me one after another, which I could better have borne all at once.

How he bore his misfortune.

I have already been considering to whom amongst my friends I might commit a helpless and decrepit old age; and having turned my eyes quite round, I found myself destitute. When a man falls at once from so great an height, it ought to be in the arms of a solid, vigorous, and fortunate friendship. Such are very rare, if there be any. At last I concluded that it was safest for me to trust to myself in my

* Hor. lib. i. epist. 18. ver. 107.

greatest

greateſt neceſſity; and if it ſhould ſo fall out, that I ſhould be but upon cold terms in fortune's favour, I would the more ſtrenuouſly recommend me to my own, and look the better to myſelf. Men on all occaſions throw themſelves upon foreign aſſiſtances to ſpare their own, which are the only certain and ſufficient aids they can arm themſelves with. Every one runs elſewhere, and to the future, foraſmuch as no one is arrived at himſelf. I was ſatisfied, that they were profitable inconveniences, as in the firſt place ill ſcholars are to be admoniſhed with the rod, when reaſon will not do, as a crooked piece of wood is made ſtrait by fire and ſtraining. I have a great while preached to myſelf to ſtick cloſe to my own concerns, and ſeparate myſelf from the affairs of others; yet I am ſtill turning my eyes aſide. A bow, a kind word, or look from a great perſon tempts me; of which God knows how little ſcarcity there is in theſe days, and what they ſignify. I moreover, without wrinkling my forehead, hearken to the perſuaſions offered me, to draw me into ſome place of traffick, and ſo gently refuſe it, as if I were half willing to be overcome. Now ſo untractable a ſpirit muſt be roughly treated, and this veſſel which thus chops and cleaves, and is ready to fall to pieces, muſt have the hoops forced down with good ſound ſtrokes of a mallet. Secondly, this accident ſerved me for exerciſe to prepare me for worſe, if I, who both by the favour of fortune, and by the condition of my manners, hoped to be the laſt, ſhould happen to be one of the firſt overtaken with this ſtorm; inſtructing myſelf betimes, to reſtrain my way of life, and fit it for a new ſtate. True liberty is to be able to do what a man will with himſelf. *Potentiſſimus eſt qui ſe abet in poteſtate* *; "he is moſt potent, who "has himſelf in his own power." In an ordinary and quiet time, a man is prepared for moderate and common accidents; but in the confuſion wherein we have been for theſe thirty years, every Frenchman, whether in

* Seneca ep. 75.

parti-

particular or in general, ſees himſelf every hour upon the point of the total ruin of his fortune. By ſo much the more ought he to have his courage armed with the ſtrongeſt and moſt vigorous proviſion. We are obliged to fortune, that we do not live in an effeminate, idle, and languiſhing age: ſome, who could never have been ſo by other means, will be made famous by their misfortunes. As I ſeldom read in hiſtories of the confuſions of other ſtates, without regret that I was not preſent, the better to conſider them, ſo my curioſity makes me in ſome ſort pleaſe myſelf with ſeeing with my own eyes this notable ſpectacle of our public death, its form and ſymptoms; and, ſince I could not retard it, am content to be deſtined to aſſiſt in it, and thereby to inſtruct myſelf. Thus do we manifeſtly covet to ſee, even in ſhadow, and the fables of theatres, the tragic repreſentations of human fortune. It is not without compaſſion of what we hear; but we pleaſe ourſelves in having our reſentment rouzed by the rarity of ſuch lamentable events. Nothing tickles that does not pinch; and good hiſtorians ſkip over calm narrations, as a ſtagnant water and dead ſea, to be again upon the narrative of wars and ſeditions, which they know are moſt acceptable to the readers. I queſtion whether or no I can handſomely confeſs at how mean a purchaſe of repoſe and tranquility, I have ſpent above half of my life in the ruin of my country. I am too patient of accidents that touch my property, and do not ſo much regard what they take from me, as what remains ſafe, at home and abroad. There is comfort in eſcaping, one while one, another while another, of thoſe evils that are levelled at me too in the conſequence, but at preſent reach only to others about us; as alſo, that in matters of public intereſt, the more univerſally my affection is extended, the weaker it is. To which may be added, that it is but too true. *Tantum ex publicis malis ſentimus, quantum ad privatas res pertinent*; "we are "only ſo far ſenſible of public evils, as they reſpect our "private affairs." And that the health which we have loſt was ſuch, that itſelf is ſome comfort for the regret we ought to have. It was health, but not ſo much in com-

parison with the sickness that has succeeded it. We are not fallen from any great height. The corruption and thievery which are in dignity and office, seem to me more insupportable. We do not take it so ill to be rifled in a wood as in a place of security. It was an universal juncture of particular members, corrupted in spite of one another, and the most of them with inveterate ulcers that neither required nor admitted of any cure. This shock therefore did really more animate than press me, by the assistance of my conscience, which was not only at peace within itself, but elevated, and I did not find any reason to complain of myself. Also, as God never sends evils any more than goods, absolutely unmixed, my health continued at that time longer than usual; and, as I can do nothing without it, there are few things that I cannot do with it. It afforded me means to rouze up all my faculties, and to lay my hand before the wound, that would else perhaps have spread farther, and in my patience, I experienced, that I had made a stand against fortune; and that it must be a great shock that could throw me out of the saddle. I do not say this to provoke her to attack me with more vigour; I am her humble servant, and beg her pardon. Let her be satisfied in God's name. Am I not sensible of her assaults? yes, certainly I am. But, as those who are possessed and oppressed with sorrow, may sometimes suffer themselves nevertheless by intervals to taste a little pleasure, and are sometimes seen to smile, so have I so much power over myself, as to make my ordinary condition quiet, and free from anxious thoughts; but I suffer myself however by fits to be surprised with the stings of those unpleasing imaginations that assault me, whilst I am arming myself to drive them away, or at least to wrestle with them.

A genuine account of a fatal plague that happened at that time in the country where Montaigne lived.

But the worst evil which befel me after all was this; I was both without doors and within assaulted with a violent plague beyond all others: for, as sound constitutions are subject to the most grievous maladies, forasmuch as they are not to be forced but by such, so my very healthful air,

where

where no contagion, though very near, in the memory of man, could ever take footing, happening to be corrupted, produced ſtrange effects.

Miſta ſenum, et juvenum denſantur funera, nullum
Sæva caput Proſerpina fugit *.

Both age and youth promiſcuous crowd the tomb;
No mortal head can ſhun th' impending doom.

I had this pleaſant condition to mortify me, that the ſight of my houſe was frightful to me. Whatever I had there was without guard, and abandoned to the mercy of every one. I, who am of ſo hoſpitable a nature, was myſelf in very great diſtreſs for a retreat for my family; a diſtracted family, frightful both to its friends and itſelf, and filling every place with horror where it attempted to ſettle; being to ſhift its abode as ſoon as any one's finger began but to ake. All diſeaſes are at ſuch a time concluded to be the plague, and people do not give themſelves leiſure to examine them. The beſt on't is, that, according to the rules of art, in every danger that a man comes near, he muſt undergo a quarantain, in extreme dread of ſuch diſtemper; your imagination all that while tormenting you at pleaſure, and turning your health itſelf into a fever; yet would not all this have gone very near my heart, had I not ſympathiſed with others ſufferings, and being forced to ſerve ſix wretched months together as a guide to this caravan: For I carry my antitodes within myſelf, which are reſolution and patience. The apprehenſion, which is particularly dreaded in this diſeaſe, little troubles me. And had I choſen to have caught it when alone, my flight had been more ſprightly and farther off. It is a kind of death, which I do not think of the worſt ſort; it is uſually ſhort, ſtupid, without pain, and alleviated by the conſideration

* Horace, lib. i. ode 28. ver. 19.

that

that it is the lot of the public; a death without ceremony, without mourning, and without a crowd. But as to the people about us, the hundredth part of them could not be saved.

——*videas desertaque regna*
*Pastorum, et longè saltus latèque vacantes**.

Deserted realms now may'st thou see of swains,
And every where forsaken groves and plains.

In this place my best revenue is manual. What an hundred men plowed for me lay a long time fallow.

The fortitude of the common people in this general desolation.

But then what example of resolution did we not see in the simplicity of all this people? every one generally renounced all care of life. The grapes, the principal revenue of the country, were left hanging in clusters upon the vines; every one indifferently preparing for, and expecting death, either to night or to-morrow, with a countenance and voice so far from fear, as if they had contracted with death in this necessity, and that it had been a universal and inevitable sentence. It is always such. But how few have the resolution of dying? The distance and difference of a few hours, and the sole consideration of company, renders the apprehension of it various to us. Do but observe these; by reason that they die in the same month, children, young people and old, they are no longer astonished at it, they lament no more. I saw some who were afraid of staying behind, as in a dreadful solitude, and seldom observed any other anxiety amongst them, than for their interment; they were troubled to see the dead bodies scattered about the fields at the mercy of beasts, which presently began to flock about them. How differing are

* Virgil. Geor. lib. iii. ver. 476.

the

Sepulture of the Neorites.

the fancies of men! The Neorites, a nation subjected by Alexander, threw the bodies of their dead into the darkest parts of their woods, to be devoured there; accounting that the only happy sepulture. Some, while they were in health, digged their own graves, and others laid them down in them whilst alive; and a labourer of mine, in dying, with his hands and feet drew the earth upon him. Was not this tucking himself up to sleep at his ease?

Roman soldiers suffocated with their own hands after the battle of Cannæ.

A bravery, in some sort, like that of the Roman soldiers, who, after the battle of Cannæ, were found suffocated with their heads thrust into holes in the earth, which they had made with their own hands. In short, a whole nation by usage was brought to a discipline nothing inferior to any studied and premeditated resolution.

Whether in the calmities of life we derive any great advantages from the instructions of science.

Most of the instructions of science, to encourage us, have in them more of shew than of force, and of ornament than profit. We have abandoned nature, and will teach her what to do; her who did so happily and so securely conduct us. And in the mean time, from the foot-steps of her instructions, and that little, which by the benefit of ignorance, remains of her image imprinted in the life of this rustic rout of unpolished men, science is constrained every day to borrow, to set a pattern, for her disciples, of constancy, tranquility, and innocence. It is pretty to see, that these which are so full of so much fine knowledge, should imitate this foolish simplicity, and that in the principle acts of virtue; and that our wisdom must learn, even from the beasts, the most profitable instructions in the greatest and most necessary concerns of human life: as, how we are to live and die, manage our fortunes, love and bring up our children, and to maintain justice. A singular testimony of human infirmity, and that this reason we so handle at our pleasure, finding evermore some diversity and novelty, leaves with us no apparent trace of nature. Men have made such use of it, as perfumers do of

of oil; they have sophisticated it with so many argumentations and far-fetched discourses, that it is thereby become variable, and particular to every one of them, and has lost its proper, constant, and universal face. We must seek evidence of it from beasts not subject to favour, corruption, nor diversity of opinions. For it is indeed true, that even they themselves do not always go exactly in the path of nature, but where they swerve from it, it is so little, that you may always see the track; as horses that are led make several bounds and curvetts, but it is always at the length of the halter, and they still follow him that leads them; and as the hawk takes his flight, but still under the restraint of his cryance. *Exilia, tormenta, bella, morbos, naufragia, meditare, ut nullo sis malo Tyro* *; "expect banishments, torture, wars, "diseases, and shipwrecks, that thou may'st not be sur-"prised by any disaster." What good will this curiosity do us, to anticipate all the inconveniencies of human nature, and to prepare ourselves, with so much trouble, to meet even things, which perhaps will never befall us? *Partem passis tristitiam facit, pati posse* †; "it troubles men as "much that they may possibly suffer, as if they really "did." Not only the blow, but the crack of the whip strikes us. Or like people in a fever, for it is certainly a fever, to go immediately and scourge yourself, because it may fall out, that fortune may one day make you undergo the lash; and to put on your furred gown at Midsummer, because you will stand in need of it at Christmas? Throw yourselves, say they, into the experience of all the evils, nay the worst that can possibly befall you; make the trial and there stand fast. On the contrary, the most easy, and most natural way would be to banish even the thoughts of them. They will not come soon enough, their true existence does not continue with us long enough, we must lengthen and extend them in thought; we must incorporate them in us before-hand, and there entertain them, as if they would not otherwise make a reasonable

* Sen. epist. 91. et 107. † Sen. epist. 74.

impression

impreſſion upon our ſenſes. We ſhall find them heavy enough when they come, (ſays one of the leaders, not one of the tender, but of the moſt ſevere ſects) in the mean time favour thyſelf, believe what pleaſes thee beſt*. What good will it do thee to beſpeak and anticipate thy ill fortune, to loſe the preſent for fear of the future; and to make thyſelf at this inſtant miſerable, becauſe thou art to be ſo in time? Theſe are his words. Learning indeed readily does us one good office, in inſtructing us exactly in the dimenſion of evils.

Curis acuens mortalia corda †.

Whetting human minds with needful care.

It were pity that any part of their bulk ſhould eſcape our ſenſe and knowledge.

Of what uſe is preparation for death.

It is certain, that, for the moſt part, preparation for death has adminiſtered more torment than the thing itſelf. It was of old truly ſaid, and by a very judicious author, *minus afficit ſenſus fatigatio, quam cogitatio* ‡; "ſuffering afflicts "the ſenſes leſs than the apprehenſion of it." The thought of preſent death ſometimes of itſelf animates us with a prompt reſolution no longer to ſhun a thing that is utterly inevitable. Several gladiators have been known, who, after having fought timorouſly, have courageouſly entertained death, offering their throats to the enemies ſword, and bidding them diſpatch. The remote ſight of future death requires a courage that is ſlow, and conſequently hard to attain to. If you know not how to die, never trouble yourſelf; nature will fully inſtruct you upon the ſpot; ſhe will exactly do that buſineſs for you, take you no care:

* Seneca, ep. 13. & 98.
† Virgil. Geo. lib. i. ver. 123.
‡ Seneca.

Incertam

Incertam fruſtra mortales funeris horam
Quæritis, et quæ ſit mors aditura via :
Pœna minor certam ſubitò perferre ruinam,
Quod timeas, gravius ſuſtinuiſſe diu *.

Mortals, in vain's your curioſity
To know the hour and death that you muſt die,
Better your fate ſtrike with a ſudden blow,
Than that you long ſhould what you fear foreknow.

We trouble life with the care of death, and death with the care of life. The one vexes, the other frights us. It is not againſt death that we prepare, that is too momentary a thing; a quarter of an hour's ſuffering, without conſequence, does not deſerve particular precepts. To ſay truth, we prepare ourſelves againſt the preparations of death. Philoſophy enjoins, that we ſhould always have death before our eyes, to foreſee and conſider it before the time; and then gives us rules and precautions to provide that this foreſight and thought do us no harm: juſt ſo do phyſicians, who throw us into diſeaſes, to the end they may have a ſubject for their drugs and their art. If we have not known how to live, it is injuſtice to teach us to die, and to make the end different from the reſt of the life. If we have known how to live conſiſtently and quietly, we ſhall know how to die ſo too. They may boaſt as much as they pleaſe, *Tota philoſophorum vita, commentatio mortis eſt* †; "that the whole life of a philoſopher is the meditation of death." But I fancy, that though it be the end, it is not the aim of life. It is its end, its extremity, but nevertheleſs not its object.

It ought to be to itſelf its own aim and deſign; its true ſtudy is to order, govern, and ſuffer itſelf. In the number of many other

The true aim of life.

* Propertius, lib. ii. eleg. 27ver. 1, 2.
† Cicero Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. i. cap. 30.

offices, which the general and principal chapter of knowing how to live comprehends, is the article of knowing how to die; and did not our fears give it weight, one of the lighteſt too.

Simple nature diſpoſes us to die with a better grace than died Ariſtotle, &c.

To judge of them by the utility, and by the naked truth, the leſſons of ſimplicity are not much inferior to thoſe which learning teaches to the contrary. Men differ in ſentiment and force, we muſt lead them to their own good, according to their capacities, and by various ways:

Quo me cunque rapit tempeſtas, deferor hoſpes *.

For as the tempeſt drives, I ſhape my courſe.

I never ſaw any countryman among my neighbours enter into the thought of what countenance and aſſurance he ſhould paſs over this laſt hour with; nature teaches him not to dream of death till he is dying; and then he does it with a better grace than Ariſtotle, upon whom death preſſes with a double weight, both of itſelf, and by ſo long a premeditation of it. Therefore it was the opinion of Cæſar, that the death which was the leaſt thought of beforehand, was the eaſieſt and the moſt happy. *Plus dolet quam neceſſe eſt, qui ante dolet quam neceſſe eſt* †; "he "grieves more than is neceſſary, who grieves before it is "neceſſary." The bitterneſs of this imagination ſprings from our curioſity. Thus do we ever hinder ourſelves, deſiring to anticipate and over-rule natural preſcriptions. It is only the learned doctors who dine worſt, when in the beſt health, and knit their brows at the image of death. The common ſort ſtand in need of no remedy or conſolation, but juſt in the ſhock, and when the blow comes; and think no more of the matter than juſt what they endure. Is it not then, as we ſay, that the ſtupidity and want of apprehenſion in the vulgar gives them this

* Hor. lib. i. epiſt. 1. ver. 15. † Senec. epiſt. 88.

patience

patience in present evils, and this profound thoughtlessness of future sinister accidents? Are their understandings, by being more gross and dull, less to be penetrated and moved? If it be so, let us henceforth, for God's sake, recommend stupidity, which so gently leads its disciples to the last favour we are promised from learning.

We have no want of good masters, who are interpreters of natural simplicity. Socrates shall be one: for, as I remember, he speaks something to this purpose, to the judges who sat upon his life. "I am afraid (gentlemen,) that if I intreat you not to put me to death, I "shall involved myself in the charge of my accusers, "which is, that I pretend to be wiser than "others, as having some more secret knowledge of things that are above and below "us. I know very well, that I have neither been familiar nor acquainted with "death, nor have ever seen any person "that has tried its qualities, from whom "to inform myself. Such as fear it, suppose they know it; as for my part, I neither know "what it is, nor what is done in the other world. Death "is perhaps an indifferent thing; perhaps, a thing to be "desired. It is nevertheless to be believed, if it be a "transmigration from one place to another, that it is a "bettering of one's condition, to go live with so many "great persons deceased, and to be exempt from having "any more to do with unjust and corrupt judges: if it "be an annihilation of our being, it is yet a bettering of "one's condition, to enter into a long and peaceable night. "We find nothing more sweet in life than quiet repose, "and profound sleep without dreams. The things that "I know to be evil, such as to offend one's neighbour, "and to disobey one's superior, whether it be God or "man, I carefully avoid: such as I do not know whether "they be good or evil, I cannot fear them. If I go hence "to die, and leave you alive, the Gods only know "whether it will go better either with you or me; where-"fore, as to what concerns me, you may do as you shall "think fit; but, according to my method giving just

Socrates's pleadings in Plato, where we are taught both by his doctrine and example to follow nature purely and simply.

" and wholesome advice, I do affirm, that you will do
" your consciences more right to set me at liberty, un-
" less you see further into my cause than I do myself.
" And judging according to my past actions, both pub-
" lic and private, according to my intentions, and ac-
" cording to the profit that so many of my fellow-citi-
" zens, both old and young, daily reap from my conver-
" sation, and the good I do to you all, you cannot duly
" acquit yourselves towards my merit, but by ordering,
" that, my poverty considered, I should be maintained
" in the Prytaneum *, at the public expence; a thing
" that I have often known you with less reason grant to
" others. Do not impute it to obstinacy or disdain, that
" I do not, according to the custom, supplicate, and
" endeavour to move you to compassion. I have both
" friends and kindred; not being (as Homer says) begot-
" ten of a block or of a stone, any more than others, that
" are able to present themselves before you in tears and
" mourning, and I have three desolate children to move
" you to pity. But I should do a shame to your city, at
" the age I am, and in the reputation of wisdom where-
" in I now stand to appear in such an abject form. What
" would men say of the other Athenians? I have always
" admonished those who have frequented my lectures,
" not to redeem their lives by an indecent action; and
" in the wars of my country, at Amphipolis, Potidea,
" Delia, and other expeditions where I have been, I have
" effectually manifested how far I was from securing my
" safety by my shame. I would moreover endanger your
" duty, and tempt you to unhandsome things: For it is
" not for my prayers to persuade you, but the pure and
" solid arguments of justice. You have sworn to the
" Gods to keep yourselves thus upright, and it would
" seem as if I suspected, or would recriminate upon you,
" should I not believe that there are Gods: and I would
" give evidence against myself, not to believe in them
" as I ought, by mistrusting their conduct, and not pure-
" ly committing my affair into their hands. I entirely rely
" upon them, and hold myself assured, they will do in

* The public exchequer.

" this

"this what ſhall be moſt fit both for you and me. Good "men, whether living or dead, have no reaſon to fear "the Gods."

Was this a childiſh pleading of a ſublimity inconceivable, and was it unneceſſary? Truly, he had very good reaſon to prefer it to that which the great orator Lyſias had penned for him; admirably couched indeed in the judiciary ſtyle, but unworthy of ſo noble a criminal. Did one ſuppliant word fall from the mouth of Socrates? Did that tranſcendent virtue ſtrike ſail in the height of its glory? Did his rich and powerful nature commit his defence to art, and, in his higheſt attempt did he renounce truth and ſimplicity, the ornaments of his ſpeaking, to deck it with the embelliſhment of figures, and the equivocations of premeditated ſpeech? He did very wiſely, and like himſelf, not to corrupt the tenour of an incorrupt life, and to deface ſo ſacred an image of the human form, for the ſake of ſpinning out his decrepitude to one year longer, and to betray the immortal memory of that glorious end. He lived not to himſelf, but for an example to the world. Would it not have been a public damage, that he ſhould have ended his life after a lazy and obſcure manner? Doubtleſs, that careleſs and indifferent concern of his about death, very well deſerved that poſterity ſhould have the more concern for it, which they alſo had. And there is nothing ſo juſt in juſtice, as what fortune ordained for his recommendation. For the Athenians abominated all thoſe who had been the cauſe of his death to ſuch a degree*, that they avoided them as excommunicated perſons, and looked upon every thing as polluted, that had been but touched by them; no one would waſh with them in the baths; none would ſalute, or own acquaintance with them; ſo that at laſt, unable longer to ſupport this public hatred they hanged themſelves. If any one ſhould think, that amongſt ſo many other examples that I had to chuſe out of the ſayings of Socrates, for my preſent purpoſe, I have made an ill choice of this, and judge that this diſcourſe is elevated above the common opinion: I muſt tell them that I

* All this is exactly copied from Plutarch's treatiſe of envy and hatred.

have purposely done it; for I am of another opinion, and think it a discourse in rank and simplicity much behind and inferior to what it is commonly taken for. He represents with an inartificial boldness, and a childish security, the pure and first impression and ignorance of nature. For it is to believed, that we have naturally a fear of pain, but not of death, for its own sake.

Death makes a part of our being, and is very beneficial to nature.

It is a part of being, and no less essential than living. To what end should nature have begot in us a hatred to it, and a horror of it, considering that it is of so great utility to her in maintaining the succession and vicissitude of her works? And that, in this universal republic, it serves more to birth and augmentation, than to destruction or ruin.

——sic rerum summa novatur *,
Mille animas una necata dedit †.

The failing of one life, is the passage to a thousand other lives; nature has imprinted in beasts the care of themselves, and of their preservation. Nay, they proceed so far, as to fear the being worse, to avoid hitting or hurting themselves, and to be afraid of our haltering and beating them; accidents which are subject to their sense and experience; but that we should kill them they cannot fear, nor have they the faculty to imagine and conclude such a thing as death. Yea, it is said, that we see them not only chearfully undergo it, horses for the most part neighing, and swans singing when they die; nay, they moreover seek it at need, of which elephants have given many examples.

Beasts naturally solicitous of their preservation.

Socrates's way of speaking and living very different from ours.

But besides all this, is not the way of arguing which Socrates here makes use of, equally admirable, both for its simplicity and vehemence? Really, it is much more easy to speak like Aristotle, and to live like

* Lucret. lib. ii. ver. 74. † I know not where Montaigne found these words, nor consequently what they signify in the original; but Montaigne immediately subjoins the sense he would have them bear.

Cæsar,

Cæſar, than to ſpeak and live as Socrates did. There lies the extreme degree of perfection and difficulty. Art cannot reach it. Now, our faculties are not ſo trained up. We do not try, we do not know them, we inveſt ourſelves with thoſe of others, and let our own lie idle. As ſome one may ſay of me, that I have here only made a noſegay of foreign flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the thread that ties them.

With what view Montaigne has charged his book with quotations.

In earneſt, I ſo far yield to the common opinion, that thoſe borrowed ornaments accompany me, but I do not think that they totally cover and hide me; that is quite contrary to my deſign, who deſire to make a ſhew of nothing but what is my own, and what is my own by nature: and could I have been ſure of credit, I had at all adventures ſpoken purely alone. I load myſelf more and more every day beyond my purpoſe and firſt method, upon the account of idleneſs and the humour of the age. If it miſbecomes me, as I believe it does, it is no matter, it may be of uſe to ſome other. Some quote Plato and Homer, who never ſaw either of them: and I alſo have taken paſſages far enough from their ſource. Having a thouſand volumes about me in the place where I write, I can preſently, without trouble or learning, borrow, if I pleaſe, from a dozen ſuch ſcrap-gatherers as I am, authors that I do not much trouble myſelf with, to embelliſh this treatiſe of Phyſiognomy. There needs no more, but a preliminary epiſtle of the German model, to ſtuff me with quotations, and we, by that means, go a begging for the liquoriſh glory, to cheat the ſilly world. Theſe lumber-pies of common places, wherewith ſo many furniſh their ſtudies, are of little uſe but to common ſubjects, and ſerve but for a ſhew, and not to direct us; a ridiculous fruit of learning, which Socrates ſo pleaſantly diſcuſſes againſt Euthydemus. I have ſeen books compoſed of matters that were never either ſtudied or underſtood; the authors committing to ſeveral of their learned friends, the examination of this and the other matter

to compile them; contenting themſelves for their ſhare to have projected the deſign, and by their induſtry to have bound up this faggot of unknown proviſion; the ink and paper at leaſt are theirs. This is to buy or borrow a book, and not to make one; it is to ſhew men, not that a man can make a book, but that, whereof they may be in doubt, he cannot make one. A preſident in my hearing boaſted, that he had heaped up two hundred and odd common places in one of his judgments: in telling this, he deprived himſelf of the honour that had been attributed to him. In my opinion, a puſillanimous and abſurd vanity for ſuch a ſubject, and ſuch a perſon. I do quite the contrary; and amongſt ſo many borrowed things, am glad if I can ſteal one, diſguiſing and deforming it for ſome new ſervice. At the hazard of having it ſaid, that it is for want of underſtanding in its natural uſe, I give it ſome particular dreſs with my own hand, to the end it may not be ſo abſolutely ſtrange. Theſe expoſe their thefts to view, and value themſelves upon them. And alſo they have more credit with the laws than with me. We naturaliſts think that there is a great and incomparable preference in the honour of invention to that of quotation.

If I would have ſpoke by learning, I had ſpoke ſooner; I had writ in a time nearer to my ſtudies, when I had more wit, and a better memory; and would ſooner have truſted to the vigour of that age than this, if I had intended to have profeſſed writing. And what if this gracious favour which fortune has even now offered me upon the account of this work, had befallen me in ſuch a time of my life, inſtead of this, wherein it is equally deſirable to poſſeſs, and to loſe? Two of my acquaintance, great men in this faculty, have in my opinion, loſt half, in refuſing to publiſh at forty years old, and chuſing to ſtay till threeſcore. Maturity has its defects as well as verdure, and worſe; and old age is as unfit for this kind of buſineſs as for any other. He who commits his decrepit age to the preſs, is a fool, if he think to ſqueeze any thing out thence that does not repreſent him deformed

Old age unfit for writing of books.

formed with dotage and ſtupidity. Our underſtandings grow coſtive and thick as they grow old. I deliver my ignorance in pomp and plenty, and my learning ſcantily and poorly; the latter accidentally and acceſſorily, the former principally and expreſsly; and write purpoſely of nothing but nothing, nor of any ſcience but that of inſcience. I have choſen a time, when my life, which I am to give an account of, lies wholly before me; what remains of it holds more of death. And of my death only, ſhould I then be as talkative as ſome are, I would moreover give notice at my departure.

Socrates's deformity of body unſuitable to the beauty of his mind.

Socrates was a perfect pattern of all great qualities: I am vexed that he had ſo deformed a body as it is ſaid, and ſo unſuitable to the beauty of his ſoul, himſelf being ſo amorous, and ſo captivated with beauty. Nature ſurely did him wrong. There is nothing more probable than a conformity and relation of the body to the ſoul. *Ipſi animi, magni refert, quali in corpore locati ſint: multa enim è corpore exiſtunt, quæ acuant mentem: multa qua obtundant* *; "it is of great conſequence in what bodies ſouls are placed, for many corporal qualities ſharpen the mind, and many others blunt it." This ſpeaks of an unnatural uglineſs and deformity of limbs: but we call that ill-favouredneſs alſo, which is an unſeemlineſs at firſt ſight, being principally lodged in the face, and which diſguſts us by the complexion, a ſpot, a forbidding countenance, ſometimes from ſome inexplicable cauſe, where the limbs are nevertheleſs of good ſymmetry and perfect. The deformity that clothed a very beautiful ſoul in Stephen la Boetius, was of this predicament. This ſuperficial uglineſs, which nevertheleſs is always the moſt imperious, is of leaſt prejudice to the ſtate of the mind, and of little certainty in the opinion of men. The other, which by a more proper name, is called a more ſubſtantial deformity, ſtrikes deeper. Not every ſhoe of gloſſy leather,

* Cicero Tuſc. lib. i. cap. 33.

but

but every ſhoe neatly made, ſhews the true ſhape of the foot within it.

Socrates ſaid of his deformity, that it denoted his ſoul to be as deformed, had he not corrected it by inſtruction; but, in ſaying ſo, I believe he did but jeſt, as his cuſtom was, and never ſo excellent a ſoul made a jeſt of itſelf.

What the beauty of the body is, and how much to be eſteemed.

I cannot repeat too often how great an eſteem I have for beauty, that potent and advantageous quality. He called it a ſhort tyranny, and Plato, the privilege of nature. We have nothing that excels it in reputation; it has the firſt place in the commerce of men; it preſents itſelf to meet us, ſeduces and prepoſſeſſes our judgment with great authority and wonderful impreſſion. Phryne had loſt her cauſe, in the hands of an excellent advocate, if, by rending her robe, ſhe had not corrupted her judges with the luſtre of her beauty *. And I find that Cyrus, Alexander, and Cæſar, the three maſters of the world, never neglected beauty in their greateſt affairs; no more did the firſt Scipio. The ſame word in Greek ſignifies *beautiful* and *good*, and the Holy Ghoſt oft calls thoſe *good*, whom he means *beautiful*. I would willingly maintain the priority of things called good, according to the ſong, which Plato † calls a trivial one, taken out of ſome of the ancient poets; viz. health, beauty, and riches. Ariſtotle ſays, that the right of command appertains to the beautiful; and that when there are perſons whoſe beauty reſembles the images of the gods, veneration is likewiſe due to them. When one aſked him ‡ why people oftner and longer frequented the company of handſome perſons? "The queſtion," ſaid he, "is "not to be aſked by any but one that is blind." The moſt and the greateſt philoſophers paid for their ſchool-

Beautiful perſons fit to command.

* Sextus Empiricus adverſus Mathematicos, lib. xi. p. 65. Quintilian who reports the ſame paſſage aſcribes to Phryne the invention of this expedient, whereby ſhe gained the favour of her judges, Inſtit. Orator. lib. ii. cap. 15. but Athenæus gives the honour of gaining her cauſe to Hyperides. † Gorgias Plat. p. 309. ‡ Diogenes Laert. in the life of Ariſtotle, lib. v. § 2.

ing,

ing, and acquired wisdom by the favour and mediation of their beauty. Not only in the men that serve me, but also in the beasts, I consider beauty as little short of goodness.

An advantageous physiognomy not directly founded on the fine features of the face.

Yet I fancy that the shape and make of a face, and those lineaments by which men guess at our tempers, and our future fortunes, is a thing that is not very directly and simply to be ranked in the class of beauty and deformity, no more than every good smell and serenity of air promises health, nor than every fog and stink does infection in a time of pestilence. Such as accuse ladies of contradicting their beauty by their manners, are not always in the right; for, in a face which is none of the best, there may be an air of honesty and fidelity: as, on the contrary, I have sometimes seen betwixt two lovely eyes, certain menaces of a dangerous and malignant nature. There are some physiognomies, that are favourable, so that in a crowd of victorious enemies, you would presently chuse, amongst men you never saw before, one rather than another, to whom to surrender, and with whom to trust your life, and yet not properly for the sake of his beauty.

Whether any assurance may be derived from physiognomy.

A man's countenance is but a slender security, and yet is something to be regarded too: and if I were to lash men, I would most severely scourge the wicked ones, who belye and betray the promises that nature has planted in their foreheads. I would with great severity punish malice in a courteous aspect. It seems as if there were some happy and some unhappy faces; and I believe there is some art in distinguishing affable from silly faces, such as are stern from the rigid, the malicious from the pensive, the coy from the melancholic, and such other bordering qualities. There are beauties which are not only haughty, but sour; and others that are charming and also insipid. To prognosticate future adventures, is a thing that I shall leave undecided.

I have,

The precept of a conformity to nature of great importance, even with regard to the outward man.

I have, for my own part, as I have ſaid elſewhere, ſimply and nakedly embraced this ancient rule, "that we ſhould "not fail to follow nature, and that the "ſovereign precept is to conform our-"ſelves to her." I have not, as Socrates did, corrected my natural temper by the force of reaſon, and have not in the leaſt moleſted my inclination by art. I go on in my old way; I contend not. My two principal parts live of their own accord in peace and good intelligence, and my nurſe's milk, thanks be to God, was tolerably wholeſome and in a good ſtate. Let me ſay this by the way, that I ſee a certain image of ſcholaſtic honeſty, almoſt only in uſe amongſt us, in greater eſteem than it is really worth; a ſlave to precepts, and fettered with hope and fear. I would have it ſuch, as that laws and religions ſhould not make, but perfect and authorize it, ſuch as has wherewith to ſupport itſelf without help, ſuch as is rooted in us by the ſeed of univerſal reaſon, and imprinted in every man by nature. That reaſon which reclaimed Socrates from his vicious bent, rendered him obedient to the gods, and the men of authority in his city; courageous in death, not becauſe his ſoul was immortal, but becauſe he is mortal. It is a doctrine ruinous to all government, and much more hurtful than ingenious and ſubtle, which perſuades the people, that a religious belief is alone ſufficient, and without morality, to ſatisfy the divine juſtice. Cuſtom demonſtrates to us a vaſt diſtinction betwixt devotion and conſcience. I have a tolerable aſpect, both in form and interpretation:

Quid dixi habere me? Imo habui Chremes ‡,
Heu! tantum attriti corporis oſſa vides †.

Have, ſaid I, Chremes? Now, alas! not ſo;
But I had once, e'er I was brought ſo low.

† Terentii Heaut. act. i. ſcen. 1. ver. 43.

‡ From whence Montaigne quoted this line I know not.

and

and which makes a quite contrary appearance to that of Socrates.

Two notable proofs of great advantage which Montaigne derived from his aſpect.

It has oft befallen me, that upon the mere credit of my preſence, and my very aſpect, perſons who had no manner of knowledge of me, have put a very great confidence in me, whether in their own affairs or mine: and I have in foreign parts obtained favours ſingular and uncommon; but two inſtances, are perhaps worth particular relation. A certain perſon deliberated to ſurpriſe my houſe and me in it; his artifice was, to come to my gate alone, and to be importunate to be let in: I knew him by name, and had reaſon to repoſe a confidence in him, as being my neighbour, and ſomething related to me. I cauſed the gate to be opened to him, as I do to every one, and in he came, quite frighted, his horſe panting, and all in a foam. He preſently entertained me with this flim-flam: "that "about half a league off, he had unluckily met with a "certain enemy of his, whom I alſo knew and had in-"deed heard of their quarrel; that this enemy had "purſued him very hard; that he therefore fled to my "gate for refuge; and that he was in great trouble for "his followers, whom, he ſaid, he concluded to be all "either dead or taken." I innocently did my beſt to comfort, hearten, and refreſh him. Preſently after, came four or five of his ſoldiers, who preſented themſelves in the ſame countenance and affright to get in too, and after them more, and ſtill more, very well mounted and armed, to the number of five and twenty or thirty, pretending that they had the enemy at their heels. This myſtery began a little to awake my ſuſpicion. I was not ignorant what an age I lived in, how much my houſe might be envied, and I had ſeveral examples of others of my acquaintance, who had met with ſuch ſort of gueſts. So it was, that knowing there was nothing to be got in having begun to do a courteſy, unleſs I went through with it, and as I could not diſengage myſelf from them without ſpoiling all; I choſe the moſt natural and ſimple way, as I always do, and invited them all

all to come in. And in truth, I am very naturally very little inclined to ſuſpicion and diſtruſt. I willingly incline towards excuſe, and the moſt favourable conſtruction. I take men according to the common run, and do not believe there can be ſuch perverſe and unnatural inclinations, unleſs convinced by manifeſt evidence, more than I do monſters and miracles; I am moreover a man who willingly commit myſelf to fortune, and throw myſelf headlong into her arms; and have hitherto found more reaſon to applaud, than to condemn myſelf for it; having found her more ſolicitous of, and more a friend to my affairs, than I am myſelf. There are ſome actions in my life, wherein my conduct may juſtly be called difficult, or, if you pleaſe, prudent. Yet of thoſe, ſuppoſing the third part to have been my own, doubtleſs the other two thirds were richly hers. We are, methinks, to blame, in that we do not enough truſt heaven with our affairs, and challenge more from our own conduct than appertains to us. And therefore it is that our deſigns ſo oft miſcarry. Heaven is diſpleaſed at the extent that we attribute to the prerogatives of human prudence in prejudice of its own, and abridges them the more we ſtretch them. The laſt comers kept themſelves on horſeback in my court-yard, whilſt their leader was with me in the parlour, who would not have his horſe ſet up in the ſtable, ſaying, he would immediately retire, as ſoon as he ſhould have news of the reſt of his men. He ſaw himſelf maſter of his enterprize, and nothing now remained but the execution. He has ſince ſeveral times ſaid (for he was not aſhamed to tell the ſtory himſelf) that my countenance and freedom had ſnatched the treachery out of his hands. He again mounted his horſe, his followers having continually their eyes intent upon him, to ſee when he would give the ſign; very much aſtoniſhed to ſee him march away and leave his prey behind him. Another time, relying upon I know not what truce, newly publiſhed in the army, I took a journey through a very fickle country. I had not rid far, before it got wind, and two or three parties of horſe, from ſeveral places,

were

were sent out to take me; one of them the third day overtook me, where I was charged by fifteen or twenty gentlemen in vizors, followed at a distance by a band of ragamuffins. Here was I surrounded and taken, drawn into the heart of a neighbouring forest, dismounted, robbed, my trunks rifled, my casket taken, and my horses and equipage divided amongst new masters. We had here a very long contest about my ransom, which they set so high, that is was plain I was not known to them. They were moreover in a very great debate about my life; and in truth, there were several alarming circumstances that threatened me with the danger I was then in.

Tunc animis opus, Ænea, tunc pectore firmo *.

Then, then, Æneas, was there need
Of an undaunted heart indeed.

I still insisted upon the letter of the truce, that they should only have the gain of what they had already taken from me, which was not to be despised, without promise of any other ransom. After we had been two or three hours in this place, and after they had mounted me on a pitiful jade that was not likely to run away from them, and committed me to the guard of fifteen or twenty harquebusiers, and dispersed my servants to others, having given order that they should carry us off prisoners several ways; when I was got some two or three musquet-shot from the place,

Jam prece Pollucis, jam Castoris implorata †;
Whilst I implor'd Castor and Pollux aid ‡.

this sudden and unexpected alteration happened. I saw the chief of them return to me with milder language, making search amongst the troopers for my lost bag-

* Virgil. Æneid. lib. vi. ver. 261. † Catullus, lib. xvi. ver. 65.
‡ Or as Montaigne might have said in his own language: after I had made a vow to all the saints in Paradise, or as we protestants say, in the Romish Calendar.

gage,

gage, and causing as much as could be recovered to be restored to me, even to my casket: but the best present they made me, was my liberty; for the rest did not much concern me at that time. The true cause of so sudden a change, and of this second thought, without any apparent impulse, and of so miraculous a repentance, at such a time, in a serious and deliberate enterprize, and which was become just by custom, (for at the first dash I plainly confessed to them, of what party I was, and whither I was going) is what I do not yet rightly apprehend. The most eminent amongst them, who pulled off his vizor, and told me his name, said to me over and over again, that I was obliged for my deliverance to my countenance, and the frankness and courage of my speech, which rendered me unworthy of such a misfortune, and he desired me to be in no dread of the like again. It is possible that the divine Bounty chose to make use of this mean instrument for my preservation. It moreover defended me the next day from other and worse ambushes, which even these had given me warning of. The last of these two gentlemen is yet living, to give an account of the story; the first was killed not long ago.

The simplicity of his intention which was visible in his eyes, and his language, prevented his freedom in discourse from being resented.

If my face did not answer for me, if men did not read in my eyes and words, the innocence of my intention, I had not lived so long without quarrels, and without giving offence, considering the indiscrete liberty I take, right or wrong, to say whatever comes into my head, and to judge rashly of things. This practice may with reason appear uncivil, and ill-adapted to our way of conversation; but I have never met with any who have judged it outrageous or malicious, or that took offence at my liberty, if he had it from my own lips. Words repeated have another kind of sense, as well as sound. Neither do I hate any person whatever; and am so slow to offend that I cannot do it, to serve reason itself. And when occasion has called me to condemn criminals, I have rather failed in the strictness of justice. *Ut magis peccari nolim,*

quam

quam satis animi ad vindicanda peccata habeam; "so that "I have more concern for men's offences, than a heart to punish them *. Aristotle, it is said, was reproached for having been too merciful to a wicked man †. "I was indeed, "said he, merciful to the man, but not to "his wickedness." Ordinary judgments are exasperated to punishment by the horror of the crime. But this cools mine. The horror of the first murder makes me fear the second, and the deformity of the first cruelty makes me abhor all imitation of it. That may be applied to me, who am but a knave of clubs, which was said of Charillus king of Sparta ‡, "he cannot be good, be-"cause he is not severe to the wicked. Or thus; for Plutarch delivers it both these ways, as he does a thousand other things, variously, and contrary to one another. "He must needs be good, because he is so even to the "wicked §." Even as in lawful actions, I do not care to be concerned when others are offended by them; so to say the truth, in lawful things, I do not make conscience enough of employing myself when others approve them.

Aristotle reproached for being merciful.

CHAP. XIII.

Of Experience.

THERE is no desire more natural than that of knowledge: we try all the ways that can lead us to it; where reason is wanting, we therein employ experience;

Why experience is not a sure means to inform us of the truth of things.

* Titus Livius lib. xxix. cap. 22. † Diog. Laert. in the life of Aristotle, lib. v. sect. 17. ‡ Plutarch, of the Difference betwixt the Flatterer and the Friend, chap. 10. § I cannot imagine from which of Plutarch's tracts Montaigne took this reflection; but in the treatise of Envy and Hatred Plutarch gives it us exactly as it is in the preceding note, viz. "How should he be good, when he is not rigid to "the wicked," chap. 3.

Per varios usus artem experientia fecit,
Exemplo monstrante viam *.

By various proofs experience art has form'd,
Example being guide.

which is a means much more weak and cheap. But truth is so great a thing, that we ought not to disdain any medium that will guide us to it. Reason has so many forms, that we know not which to adhere to; experience has no fewer. The consequence we would draw from the comparison of events is uncertain, by reason they are always unlike. There is no quality so universal in this image of things as diversity and variety. The Greeks, the Latins, and we, for the most express example of similitude, have pitched upon that of eggs. And yet there have been men, particularly one at Delphos, who could distinguish marks of difference amongst eggs so well, that he never mistook one for another; and, having many hens, could tell which had laid it †. Dissimilitude intrudes itself into our works; no art can arrive at a perfect similitude. Neither Perozet, nor any other card-maker, can so carefully polish and blanch the backs of his cards, that some gamesters will not distinguish them by only seeing them shuffled by another: resemblance does not so much make one, as difference makes another. Nature has obliged herself to make nothing like to another.

Of what use is the multiplicity of laws.

And yet I am not much pleased with his opinion, who thought by the multitude of laws to curb the authority of judges, by retrenching them. He was not aware that there is as much latitude in the interpretation of laws, as in their form; and they deceive themselves, who think to lessen and stop our debates by summoning

* Manilius, lib. i. ver. 61.

† Cicero Acad. Quæst. lib. iv. cap. 18.

us

us to the expreſs words of the Bible: ſince human wit finds as large a field for controverting the ſenſe of another, as for delivering his own; and, as if there were leſs animoſity and bitterneſs in gloſſing than inventing. We ſee how much he was deceived; for we have more laws in France, than in all the reſt of the world beſides; and more than would be neceſſary for the regulation of all the worlds of Epicurus. *Ut olim flagitiis, ſic nunc legibus laboramus*:* "ſo that as formerly we were "plagued with vices, we are now as ſick of the laws:" yet we have left ſo much to the opinion and deciſion of our judges, that there never was ſo full and uncontrolled a liberty. What have our legiſlators got by culling out an hundred thouſand particular caſes, and facts, and by adding to thoſe, an hundred thouſand laws? This number holds no manner of proportion with the infinite diverſity of human actions; the multiplications of our invention will never reach the variety of examples. Add to them an hundred times as many more, yet it will never happen, that of events to come, any one will fall out, that, in the millions of events ſo choſen and recorded, ſhall ſo tally with any one, and be ſo exactly coupled and compared with it, that there will not remain ſome circumſtance and diverſity which will require a variation of judgment. There is little relation betwixt our actions that are in perpetual mutation, and the laws that are fixt and immoveable; the moſt to be deſired, are thoſe which are the moſt rare, the moſt ſimple, and general: and I am further of opinion, that we were better to have none at all, than to have them ſo numerous.

The laws of nature better than our own.

Nature always gives them better, than thoſe are which we make ourſelves; witneſs the picture of the poets golden age, and the ſtate wherein we ſee nations live, who have no other. Some there are, who, for their only judge, take the firſt paſſer by that travels along their mountains, to determine their cauſe: and others, who, on their market-day, chuſe

Paſſengers made uſe of for judges.

* Tacit. lib. iii. cap. 25.

out some one amongst them, who decides all their controversies on the spot. What danger would there be, if the wisest should thus determine ours, according to occurrences, and by sight, without obligation of example and consequence? Every shoe to his own foot. When king Ferdinand sent colonies to the Indies, he wisely provided that they should not carry along with them any students of the long robe, lest law-suits should get footing in that new world; as being a science, in its own nature, the mother of altercation and division; judging with Plato, that lawyers and physicians are the pests of a country *.

How it comes to pass, that the vulgar tongue, which serves for every other purpose, becomes obscure and ambigious in covenants and testaments.

How comes it to pass that our common language, so easy for all other uses, becomes obscure, and unintelligible in wills and contracts? And that he who so clearly expresses himself, whatever he speaks or writes, cannot find in this any way of declaring himself which is not liable to doubt and contradiction? If it be not that the great men of this art, applying themselves with peculiar attention to cull out hard words, and form artful clauses, have so weighed every syllable, and so thoroughly sifted every sort of connection, that they are now confounded and intangled in the infinity of figures, and so many minute divisions, that they can no longer be liable to any rule or prescription, nor any certain intelligence. *Confusum est quicquid usque in pulverem sectum est* †; "whatever is "beaten into powder is confused." As you have seen children try to bring a mass of quicksilver into a certain number of parts, the more they press and work it, and endeavour to reduce it to their own will, the more they irritate the liberty of this generous metal; it baffles their art, and subdivides and sparkles itself into so many separate bodies, as are innumerable; so it is here; for in subdividing these subtilties, men are apt to encrease their doubts, they are led into a way of stretching

* De Republ. lib. iii. p. 621. † Sen. epist. 89.

and

and diverſifying difficulties, which are lengthened and diſperſed. By ſtarting and ſplitting of queſtions, they make the world fructify and abound in uncertainties and diſputes; as the earth is made fertile, the deeper it is ploughed and the more it is harrowed. *Difficultatem facit doctrina*; "doctrine begets difficulty." We doubted of Ulpian, and are now more perplexed with Bartolus and Baldus. We ſhould blot out the trace of this innumerable diverſity of opinions, not adorn ourſelves with it, and intoxicate poſterity. I know not what to ſay to it, but experience makes it manifeſt, that ſo many interpretations divide truth, and mar it. Ariſtotle writ to be underſtood, which if he could not be, much leſs will another that is not ſo good at it; and a third than he who expreſſed his own thoughts. We open the matter, and ſpill it in pouring out. Of one ſubject we make a thouſand, and in multiplying and ſubdividing them, relapſe into the infinity of the atoms of Epicurus. Never did two men make the ſame judgment of the ſame thing; and it is impoſſible to find two opinions exactly alike, not only in ſeveral men, but in the ſame men, at different times. I oft find matter of doubt, of things which the commentary diſdains to take notice of. I am moſt apt to ſtumble on even ground, like ſome horſes that I have known, which make moſt trips in the ſmootheſt way.

Gloſſes and commentaries only ſerve to obſcure the text, and eſpecially that of the books of the law.

Who will not ſay that gloſſes augment doubts and ignorance, ſince there is no one book to be found, either human or divine, which the world buſies itſelf about, whoſe difficulties are cleared by interpretation. The hundredth commentator ſtill refers you to the next, more knotty and perplexed than he. When were we ever agreed amongſt ourſelves, that a book had enough, and that there was no more to be ſaid on the ſubject? This is moſt apparent in the law pleadings. We give the authority of law to innumerable doctors, arrets *ad infinitum*, and to as many interpretations; yet do we find any end of the neceſſity of interpreting? Is there for

all that any progreſs or advancement towards tranquillity; or do we ſtand in need of any fewer advocates and judges, than when this maſs of law was yet in its infancy? We, on the contrary, obſcure and bury the ſenſe of it. We diſcover no more of it than what ſo many incloſures and barriers will permit. Men are not ſenſible of the natural diſeaſe of the mind. It does nothing but ferret and enquire, and is eternally wheeling, plodding and perplexing itſelf; and like the ſilk-worm, ſuffocates itſelf in its own web; or like *mus in pice*, "a mouſe in a tar-barrel, which the more it ſtruggles to "get out, is the more entangled." It thinks it diſcovers at a great diſtance I know not what glimpſe of imaginary light and truth; but whilſt it runs to it, ſo many difficulties, hindrances, and new inquiſitions croſs its way, as miſlead and intoxicate it. Not much unlike Æſop's dog, that ſeeing ſomething like a dead body floating in the ſea, and not being able to approach it, attempted to drink the water, in order to lay the paſſage dry, and ſo drowned itſelf. To which tallies, what one Crates * ſaid of the writings of Heraclitus, "that they required a reader who could ſwim "well, that the depth and weight of his doctrine might "not overwhelm and choak him †. It is nothing but particular weakneſs that makes us content ourſelves with what others, or ourſelves have found out in this purſuit of knowledge; thoſe of better underſtanding would not reſt ſo content; there is always room and to ſpare for one to ſucceed, nay even for ourſelves, and every one elſe; there is no end of our inquiries, our end is in the other world. It is a ſign either of a contracted mind when it is ſatisfied, or that it is grown weary. No generous mind ſtops of itſelf; it always puſhes on, and beyond its power; it has ſallies beyond its compaſs. If it do not advance and preſs forward, and fall back, ruſh, turn and wheel about, it is but

* According to Diogenes Laert. lib. ii. ſect. 22. this was not Crates, but Socrates, who ſaid of the writings of Heraclitus, that they had need of as excellent divers as any in the iſle of Delos.

† Suidas in Ἡράκλ. κολυμβήτου.

ſprightly

ſprightly by halves; its purſuits are without bound or method; its aliment is admiration, ambiguity the chace; which Apollo plainly declared, by always ſpeaking to us in a double, obſcure, and oblique ſenſe; not feeding, but amuſing and puzzling us. It is an irregular and perpetual motion, without example and without aim. Its inventions heat, purſue, and introduce one another.

Ainſi voit-on en un ruiſſeau coulant,
Sans fin l'une eau, apres l'autre roulant;
Et tout de rang, d'un eternel conduit,
L'une fuit l'autre, & l'une l'autre fuit.
Par cette-cy, celle-là eſt pouſſée,
Et cette-cy par l'autre eſt devancée:
Touſiours l'eau va dans l'eau, & touſiours eſt-ce
Meſme ruiſſeau, & touſiours eau diverſe.

So in a running ſtream where currents play,
Succeſſive waves ſtill urge their liquid way,
And as they ſwiftly glide along the ſhore,
Each preſſes to o'ertake what's gone before.
By this that's evermore puſh'd on, and this
By that continually preceded is:
In the ſame courſe the river ceaſeleſs flows,
But ſtill new waves the varied maſs compoſe.

There is more ado to interpret interpretations than things, and more books upon books than upon any other ſubject; we do nothing but comment upon one another. Every place ſwarms with commentaries; but of authors there is great ſcarcity. Is it not the principal and moſt reputed knowledge of our times to underſtand the learned? Is it not the common and final aim of all ſtudies? Our opinions are grafted upon one another; the firſt ſerves for a ſtock to the ſecond, the ſecond to the third, thus ſtep by ſtep we climb the ladder. From whence it comes to paſs, that he who is mounted higheſt has oft more honour than merit; for he is got up but a

grain upon the ſhoulders of the laſt but one. How oft, and perhaps how fooliſhly, have I ſtretched my book, to make it ſpeak of itſelf? Fooliſhly, if for no other reaſon but this, that I ought to call to mind what I ſay of others who do the ſame; that the fond looks they ſo often caſt upon their works, witneſs that their hearts pant with ſelf-love, and that even the diſdainful reproaches wherewith they laſh them, are no other than the diſſembled careſſes of a maternal kindneſs; according to Ariſtotle, whoſe valuing and undervaluing himſelf, frequently ſpring from the ſame air of arrogancy: I urge for my excuſe, that I ought in this to have more liberty than others, becauſe I purpoſely treat of myſelf and of my writings, as I do of my other actions; but though my theme turn upon itſelf, I know not whether or no every one elſe will take ſuch liberty.

Our diſputes are endleſs, and moſt of them about words.

I have obſerved in Germany, that Luther has left as many and more diviſions and diſputes behind him, about the doubt of his opinions, than he himſelf raiſed about the holy ſcriptures. Our conteſt is verbal. I demand what nature is, what pleaſure, circle and ſubſtitution are? The queſtion is about words, and is anſwered in the ſame coin. A ſtone is a body, but if a man ſhould further urge, and what is a body? Subſtance; and what is ſubſtance? and ſo on *, he would drive the reſpondent to the end of his dictionary. We exchange one word for another, and often for one leſs underſtood. I better know what man is, than I know what animal is, or mortal, or rational. To ſatisfy one doubt, they give me ground for three; it is the Hydra's head. Socrates † aſked Menon what virtue was; "there is, ſays Menon, the virtue "of a man and of a woman, of a magiſtrate and of

* We need go no farther, than the Engliſh philoſopher Locke, famous for his penetration and the incomparable rectitude of his judgment, who has plainly ſhewn, that we have no clear, exact idea of what we call ſubſtance, lib. i. chap. 4. ſect. 10. and lib. ii. chap. 23. ſect. 2, &c. of his Eſſay on the human Underſtanding.

† Plato, in Menone, p. 409.

"a pri-

" a private perſon, of an old man, and of a child. Ve-
" ry well, ſays Socrates, we were in queſt of one virtue,
" and thou haſt brought us a ſwarm; we put one queſ-
" tion, and thou returneſt a whole hive." As no event, nor no form entirely reſembles another; ſo there is not one that entirely differs from another; ſuch is the ingenius mixture of nature. If our faces were not alike, we could not diſtinguiſh man from beaſt; if they were not unlike, we could not diſtinguiſh one man from another. All things hold by ſome ſimilitude, every example halts. And the relation which is drawn from experience is always faulty and imperfect; compariſons are always coupled at one end or other; ſo do the laws ſerve, and are fitted to every one of our affairs by ſome wreſted, biaſſed, and forced interpretation.

Imperfection of the laws that concern the ſubjects of a ſtate.

Since the moral laws, that concern the particular duty of every one in himſelf, are ſo hard to be taught and obſerved, as we ſee they are; it is no wonder if thoſe which govern ſo many particulars, are much more ſo. Do but conſider the form of this juſtice that governs us, it is a true teſtimony of human weakneſs, ſo full it is of error and contradiction. What we find to be favour and ſeverity in juſtice, (and we find ſo much of both, that I know not whether the medium is ſo often met with), are ſickly parts, and unjuſt members of the very body and eſſence of juſtice. The country people come to bring me news, in great haſte, that they juſt left, in a foreſt of mine, a man with an hundred wounds upon him, who was yet breathing, and begged of them water for pity's ſake, and help to raiſe him up; ſaying, they durſt not come near him, but ran away, leſt the officers of juſtice ſhould catch them there; and for fear, as it falls out with thoſe who are found near a murdered perſon, they ſhould be called in queſtion about this accident to their utter ruin, having neither money nor any means to defend their innocence. What ſhould I have ſaid to theſe people? It is certain that this office of humanity would have brought them into trouble.

How

Known innocents punished in complaisance to the forms of law.

How many innocents have we known that have been punished even without the judge's fault, and how many more are there that have not arrived at our knowledge? this case happened in my time. Certain men were condemned to die for a murder committed; and their sentence, if not pronounced, was at least determined and concluded on. The judges, just in the nick, are advertised by the officers of an inferior court hard by, that they have some men in custody, who have directly confessed the said murder, and give such light into the fact, as is not to be doubted. It was then notwithstanding put to the question, whether or no they ought to suspend execution of the sentence already passed upon the former. They considered the novelty of the example, and the consequence of staying judgments, that the sentence of death was duly passed, and the judges could not retract. To conclude, these poor devils were sacrificed to the forms of law. Philip, or some other, provided against a like inconvenience, after this manner. He had condemned a man to pay a great fine to another, by a determined judgment. The truth some time after being discovered, it appeared he had passed an unjust sentence; on one side was the reason of the cause, on the other side the reason of the judiciary forms. He in some sort satisfied both, leaving the sentence in the state it was, and out of his own purse paying the costs of the condemned party. But he had to do in a reparable affair, mine were irreparably hanged. How many sentences have I seen more criminal than the crimes?

The innocent man is not sure of his life or property, by putting himself into the hands of justice.

All this makes me remember the ancient opinions, "that of necessity a man must "do wrong by retail, who will do right in "the gross; and injustice in little things, "that will have it in his power to do justice in great: that human justice is "formed after the model of physic, according to which, "all that is useful, is also just and honest; and what is "held by the Stoics, that nature herself proceeds con-

"trary

" trary to juſtice in moſt of her works;" and what is received by the Cyrenaics *, " that there is nothing juſt in " itſelf, but that cuſtoms and laws make juſtice:" and what the Theodorians hold, who maintain theft, ſacrilege, and all ſorts of uncleanlineſs juſt in a wiſe man †, if he knows them to be profitable to him; there is no remedy, I am in the ſame caſe that Alcibiades was, that I will never, if I can help it, put myſelf into the hands of a man who ſhall determine of my head, where my life and honour ſhall more depend upon the care and diligence of my attorney, than upon my own innocence. I would venture myſelf with ſuch a juſtice as would take notice of my good deeds as well as my ill, and where I had as much to hope as to fear. Indemnity is not ſufficient ſatisfaction to a man who does better than not to do amiſs; but our juſtice preſents us only one hand, and that the left hand too; let him be who he will, he ſhall be ſure to go off with loſs.

Judges eſtabliſhed in China to reward good actions, as well as to puniſh the bad.

In China, of which kingdom the government and arts, without correſpondence with, or knowledge of ours, ſurpaſs our beſt examples in ſeveral parts of excellence; and of which the hiſtory gives me to underſtand how much greater and more various the world is, than either the ancients or we can penetrate, the officers deputed by the prince to viſit the ſtate of his provinces, as they puniſh thoſe who behave themſelves ill in their places, ſo do they liberally reward thoſe who have carried themſelves above the common ſort, and beyond the neceſſity of their duty; they there preſent themſelves, not only to be protected, but to get; not ſimply to be paid, but to be rewarded.

Montaigne never had a ſuit in any court of juſtice.

No judge, thanks be to God, ever yet ſpoke to me, in the quality of a judge, upon any cauſe whatever, whether my own, or that of another, whether criminal or civil; nor was I ever within the walls of a priſon. Imagination renders the very outſide of a jail

* Diog. Laert. in the life of Ariſtippus, lib. ii. § 92.
† Ibid. § 99.

my

my averſion: I am ſo fond of liberty, that ſhould I be debarred acceſs to any corner of the Indies, I would be ſomewhat uneaſy. And whilſt I can find either earth or air elſewhere, I ſhall never lurk, where I muſt hide myſelf. Good God! how ill ſhould I bear to be confined, as many people are, to a corner of the kingdom, deprived of the privilege of entering into the principal cities and courts, and the liberty of the public roads, for having quarrelled with our laws. If thoſe under which I live, ſhould but wag a finger at me, by way of menace, I would immediately go ſeek out others, let them be where they would; all my little prudence in the civil war wherein we are now engaged, is employed, that they may not hinder my egreſs and regreſs.

What it was that in Montaigne's time kept up the credit of the French laws, in other reſpects very unreaſonable.

Now the laws keep up their credit, not for being juſt, but becauſe they are laws: it is the myſtical and the ſole foundation of their authority; and it is well it is ſo; they being oft made by fools; for the moſt part by men that out of hatred to equality, fail in equity; but always by men who are vain and fickle authors. There is nothing ſo groſly, nor ſo commonly faulty as the laws. Whoever obeys them becauſe they are juſt, does not juſtly obey them as he ought. Our French laws, by their irregularity and deformity, in ſome ſort lend a helping hand to diſorder and corruption, as is manifeſt in their diſpenſation and execution. The command is ſo perplexed and inconſtant, that it in ſome meaſure excuſes both diſobedience, and the vice of the interpretation, the adminiſtration and the obſervation of it. What fruit then ſoever we may reap from experience, will be of little ſervice to our inſtruction, which we draw from foreign examples; if we make ſo little profit of that we have of our own, which is more familiar to us, and doubtleſs ſufficient to inſtruct us in that whereof we have abſolute need. I ſtudy myſelf more than any other ſubject; this is my metaphyſic, this my natuaral philoſophy.

Quâ Deus hanc mundi temperet arte domum,
Qua venit exoriens, quâ deficit, unde coactis *,
Cornibus in plenum menstrua luna edit:
Unde salo superant venti, quid flamine captet
Eurus, et in nubes unde perennis aqua.
Sit ventura dies mundi quæ subruat arces:
Quærite, quos agitat mundi labor †.

By what means God the universe does sway,
Or how the pale-fac'd sister of the day,
When, in encreasing, can her horns unite,
Till they contract into a full orb'd light;
Why ocean of the winds the better get,
Why Eurus blows, and clouds are always wet;
What day the world's great fabric must o'erthrow,
Let them enquire, who would its secrets know.

In this university, I suffer myself to be ignorantly and negligently led by the general law of the world. I shall know it well enough when I feel it; my learning cannot make it alter its course; it will not change itself for me; it is folly to hope it, and a greater folly to concern a man's self about it, seeing it is necessarily alike, public and common. The bounty and capacity of the governor most absolutely discharge us of all care of the government. Philosophical inquisitions and contemplations serve for no other use but to feed our curiosity. Philosophers, with great reason, refer us to the rules of nature; but they have no need of so sublime a knowledge: they falsify them, and present us with nature's face painted with too high-coloured and too adulterate a complexion, from whence spring so many different pictures of so uniform a subject. As she has given us feet to walk with, so has she given us prudence to guide us in life; not such an ingenious, robust, and majestic prudence as that of their invention, but yet one that is easy, quiet and

* Prop. lib. iii. eleg. 5. ver. 25, &c. † Lucan. lib. i. ver. 417.

ſalutary; and ſuch very well performs what the other promiſes, in him who has the good luck to know how to employ it ſincerely and regularly, that is to ſay, according to nature. The moſt ſimply to commit a man's ſelf to nature, is to do it the moſt wiſely. Oh what a ſoft, eaſy, and wholſome pillow is ignorance and incuriosity, whereon to repoſe a well turned head! I had rather underſtand myſelf well in myſelf, than in Cicero. Of the experience I have of myſelf, I find enough to make me wiſe, if I were but a good ſcholar. Whoever calls to mind the exceſs of his paſt anger, and to what a degree that fever tranſports him, ſees the deformity of this paſſion better than in Ariſtotle, and conceives a more juſt hatred againſt it. Whoever remembers the hazards he has run, thoſe that threatened him, and the ſlight occaſions that have removed him from one ſtate to another, does by that prepare himſelf for future changes, and the acknowledgment of his condition. The life of Cæſar himſelf is no more exemplary for us than our own, and though it was popular and commanding, it was ſtill a life liable to all human accidents. Let us but liſten to it, and we apply to ourſelves all whereof we have principal need. Whoever calls to memory, how many times he has been miſtaken in his own judgment, is he not a great fool if he does not ever after ſuſpect it? When I find myſelf convinced, by another's reaſon, of a falſe opinion, I do not ſo much learn what he has ſaid to me that is new, which particular ignorance would be no great purchaſe, as I do in general my own weakneſs, and the treachery of my underſtanding, from whence I extract the reformation of the whole maſs. In all my other errors I do the ſame, and find this rule greatly beneficial to life. I regard not the ſpecies and individual, as a ſtone that I have ſtumbled at; I learn to ſuſpect my ſteps every-where, and am careful to place them right. To learn that a man has ſaid or done a fooliſh thing, is a thing of no moment. A man muſt learn that he is nothing but a fool, a much more ample and important inſtruction. The falſe ſteps that my memory has ſo often betrayed me into, even then when it was moſt ſecure

of

of itſelf, are not idly thrown away; it may now ſwear to me, and aſſure me as much as it will, I ſhake my head, and dare not truſt it; the firſt oppoſition that is made to my teſtimony, puts me in ſuſpence; and I durſt not rely upon it in any thing of moment, nor warrant it in another perſon's concerns: and were it not that what I do for want of memory, others do more often for want of ſincerity, I would always in matter of fact, rather chooſe to take truth from another's mouth than my own. If every one did but watch the effects and circumſtances of the paſſions that ſway him, as I have done that which I am moſt ſubject to, he would ſee them coming, and would a little break their impetuoſity and career; they do not always ſeize us on a ſudden, there are threatenings, and degrees.

Fluctus uti primo cœpit cùm albeſcere vento,
Paulatim ſeſe tollit mare, et altiùs undas
Erigit, inde imo conſurgit ad æthera fundo.*

As the ſea firſt begins to foam and fret,
Thence higher ſwells, higher, and higher yet,
Till at the laſt ſo high the billows riſe,
They ſeem to bid defiance to the ſkies.

Judgment holds in me a magiſterial ſeat; at leaſt, it carefully endeavours to make it ſo: it lets my appetites take their own courſe; as hatred and friendſhip; nay, even that which I bear to myſelf, without ſuffering alteration and corruption. If it cannot reform the other parts according to its own model, at leaſt it ſuffers not itſelf to be corrupted by them, but plays its game apart. That admonition to every one to know themſelves, ought to be of important effect, ſince the God of wiſdom and light cauſed it to be written on the front of his temple, as compre-

* Virgil. Æneid. lib. vii. ver. 528, &c.

hending

hending all he had to adviſe us. Plato ſays alſo, that prudence is nothing but the execution of this ordinance; and Socrates verifies it by piece-meal in Xenophon. The difficulties and obſcurity are not diſcerned in any ſcience, but by thoſe that are got into it; for a certain degree of underſtanding is requiſite to be able to know that a man is ignorant: and we muſt puſh at a door to know whether it be bolted againſt us. From hence this Platonic ſubtilty ſprings, that neither they who know are to enquire, foraſmuch as they know; nor they who do not know, foraſmuch as to enquire, they muſt know what they enquire of. So in this of knowing a man's ſelf, that which every man is ſeen ſo reſolved and ſatisfied in with himſelf, and that which every man thinks he ſufficiently underſtands, ſignifies, that every one underſtands nothing at all of the matter: as Socrates tells Euthydemus. I who profeſs nothing elſe, therein find ſo infinite a depth and variety, that all the fruit I have reaped from my learning, ſerves only to make me ſenſible how much I have to learn. To my weakneſs, ſo often confeſſed, I owe the propenſity I have to modeſty, my aſſent to the articles of belief impoſed upon me, a conſtant faintneſs and moderation in my opinions, and a hatred of that troubleſome and wrangling arrogance, wholly believing and truſting in itſelf, the capital enemy of diſcipline and truth. Do but hear how they advance and domineer; the firſt fooleries they utter, are in the ſtyle wherewith men eſtabliſh religion and laws. *Nihil eſt turpius quàm cognitioni et perceptioni aſſertionem, approbationemque præcurrere* *; "nothing is more abſurd than that aſſertion "and approbation ſhould precede knowledge and percep-"tion." Ariſtarchus ſaid that anciently there was ſcarce ſeven wiſe men to be found in the world, and in his time ſcarce ſo many fools. Have not we more reaſon than he to ſay ſo in this age? affirmation, and obſtinacy, are expreſs ſigns of ſtupidity. If a fellow has ſtumbled and had a hundred falls in a day, yet he will be at his ergo's

* Cicero Acad. lib. i. cap. 12.

as

as resolute and sturdy, as before; so that one would conclude he had had some new soul and vigour of understanding infused into him; and that it happened to him as it did to that ancient son of Tellus, who took fresh courage, and was made stronger by his fall.

——cui cùm tetigere parentem,
Jam defecta vigent renovato robore membra *.

Whose broken limbs upon his mother laid,
Immediately new force and vigour had.

Does not this incorrigible coxcomb think that he assumes a new understanding, by undertaking a new dispute? I accuse human ignorance by my own experience, which is in my opinion the world's best school-master. Such as will not conclude it so in themselves, by so vain an example as mine, or their own, let them believe it from Socrates, the master of masters. For the philosopher Antisthenes said to his disciples: "Let us go, and hear "Socrates, I will be a pupil with you †." And maintaining this doctrine of his Stoical sect, that virtue was sufficient to make a life completely happy, he added, it had no need of any other thing whatever, except the vigour of Socrates. The long attention that I have employed in considering myself, also fits me to judge tolerably of others; and there are few things whereof I speak better, and more excusably. I happen very oft to see and distinguish the qualities of my friends more nicely than they do themselves. I have astonished some with the pertinence of my description, and have given them warning of themselves. By having from my infancy been accustomed to contemplate my own life in that of others, I have acquired a complexion studious in that particular. And when I am once intent upon it, I let few things

* Lucan. lib. iv. ver. 599. † Diog. Laert. in the life of Antisthenes, lib. vi. § 2.

about me, whether countenances, humours, or discourses which serve to that purpose, escape me. I study all, both what I am to avoid, and what I am to follow. Also in my friends, I discover their inward inclinations by their productions; not by ranging this infinite variety of so differerent and detached actions into certain species and chapters, not distinctly distributing my parcels and divisions under known heads and classes.

Sed neque quàm multæ species, et nomina quæ sint,
Est numerus *.

But not the number of their kind and names,
They are too many.

The learned speak and deliver their fancies more specifically, and by piece-meal. I, who see no further into things than as custom informs me, generally give mine by way of experiment, without form and method. As in this, I pronounce my opinion by loose and disjointed articles; it is a thing that cannot be spoken at once, and in gross. Relation and conformity are not to be found in such low and common souls as ours. Wisdom is a solid and entire building, of which every piece keeps its place, and carries its mark. *Sola sapientia in se tota conversa est* †. "Wisdom only is wholly turned into itself." I leave it to artists, (and I know not whether or no they will be able to bring it about in a thing so perplexed, small and casual) to marshal into distinct bodies, this infinite diversity of faces, and to settle and regulate our inconstancy. I not only find it hard to piece our actions to one another, but I likewise find it very hard to design them properly every one by themselves by any principal quality, so ambiguous and capricious they are by the se-

* Virg. Geor. lib. ii. ver. 103, where he is speaking of the innumerable kinds of grapes. † Cicero de Fin. lib. iii. cap. 7.

veral

veral lights. What is remarked for rare in Perſeus king of Macedon, that his mind fixing it ſelf to no one condition, wandered through all ſorts of life, and behaved in a manner ſo wild and extravagant, that is was neither known by himſelf, or any other, what kind of man he was *, ſeems almoſt to ſuit all mankind. And I have ſeen another of his temper, to whom I think this concluſion might more properly be applied: he kept no medium, but was ſtill running headlong from one extreme to another, upon occaſions not to be gueſſed at; he ſteered no manner of courſe without wonderful contrariety; and had no one quality uncompounded: ſo that the beſt gueſs that man can one day make, will be that he affected and ſtudied to make himſelf known, by being not to be known. A man had need have good ears to hear himſelf frankly cenſured. And as there are few that can bear this without being nettled, thoſe who hazard the undertaking it to us, manifeſt a ſingular effect of friendſhip; for it is ſincere love indeed, to attempt to hurt and offend us for our own good. I think it rude to cenſure a man whoſe ill qualities are more than his good ones. Plato requires three things in him that will examine the ſoul of another, to wit †, knowledge, good will, and boldneſs.

I was once aſked what I would have thought myſelf fit for, had any one deſigned to make uſe of me in my younger years.

Dum melior vires ſanguis dabat, æmula nedum
Temporibus geminis canebat ſparſa ſenectus ‡.

Whilſt better blood my limbs with vigour fed,
And ere old age had ſnow'd upon my head.

* Tit. Liv. lib. xii. cap. 20. † Socrates, in Plato's dialogue intitled Gorgias. ‡ Æneid. lib. v. ver. 415.

Montaigne would have been a fit person to talk freely to his sovereign, to tell him truths, and to teach him to know himself.

For nothing, said I. And I am willing enough to excuse my inability to do any thing, that may enslave myself to another. But I would have told these truths to my sovereign, and have controuled his manners, if he had so pleased; not in gross by scholastic lessons, which I understand not, and from which indeed I see no true reformation spring in those that do; but by observing them gradually, at all opportunities, and simply and naturally judging them by the eye, and distinctly one by one, giving him to understand upon what terms he was in the common opinion, in opposition to his flatterers. There is none of us that would not be worse than kings, if so continually corrupted as they are with that sort of vermin. Could even Alexander, that great king and philosopher, defend himself from them? I would have fidelity, judgment, and freedom enough for that purpose. This would be a nameless office; otherwise it would lose both its grace and effect; and it is a part that is not indifferently fit for all men. For truth itself has not the privilege to be spoken at all times, and in all events; the use of it, noble as it is, has its circumscriptions and limits. It oft falls out, as the world now goes, that a man lets it slip into the ear of a prince, not only to no purpose, but even injuriously and injustly. No man shall make me believe, that a virtuous remonstrance may not be viciously applied, and that the interest of the substance is not oft to give place to that of the form.

For such a purpose, I would have a man that is content with his own fortune;

Quod sit, esse velit, nihilque malit *.

Who likes that present state of his,
And would not be but what he is.

* Mart. Ep. lib. x. epig. 47. ver. 12.

and

and born to a moderate fortune; as on the one hand he would not ſcruple to touch his ſovereign's heart to the quick, for fear of loſing his preferment, and on the other, by being of a middling quality, he would have more eaſy communication with all ſorts of people: And I would have this office limited to only one man, becauſe to diffuſe the privilege of this liberty and privacy to many, would beget an inconvenient irreverence; and even of that one too, I would above all things require the fidelity of ſilence.

Who would be the moſt proper perſon for the exerciſe of this office to princes.

A king is not to be believed when he boaſts of his conſtancy in ſtanding the ſhock of the enemy for his glory, if for his profit and amendment, he cannot bear the freedom of a friend's advice, which can do no more than ſting his ear, the remainder of its effect being ſtill in his own power. Now, there is no rank of men whatever who ſtand in ſo great need of true and free admonition as they do. They act in a public ſphere, and have ſo many ſpectators to pleaſe, that when men have uſed to conceal from them whatever would divert them from their own courſe, they inſenſibly have found themſelves involved in the hatred and deteſtation of their people, ſometimes upon ſuch ſlight occaſions as they might have avoided without any prejudice even to their pleaſures had they been adviſed and ſet right in time. Their favourites commonly have more regard to themſelves, than they have to their ſovereigns; and indeed it ſtands them upon, as in truth moſt offices of true friendſhip when applied to the ſovereign, are diſagreeable and and dangerous in the eſſay; ſo that therein there is need, not only of very great affection and freedom, but of courage too.

How much kings are in want of ſuch a perſon.

Free advice neceſſary for kings.

The advantage that may be derived from Montaigne's Eſſays for the health of the ſoul, and much more for that of the body.

To conclude, all this medley of things here compiled is nothing but a regiſter of my own experiments in life, which for its internal ſoundneſs is exemplary enough to take inſtruction againſt the grain; but as to bodily health, no man can furniſh out more profitable experience than I, who preſent it pure, and no way corrupted and changed by art and opinion. Experience is properly upon its own dung-hill in the ſubject of phyſic, where reaſon wholly gives it place. Tiberius * ſaid, that whoever had lived twenty years, ought to be reſponſible to himſelf for all things that were hurtful or wholeſome to him, and to know how to order himſelf without phyſic. And he might have learnt it of Socrates, who adviſing his diſciple to be ſolicitous of their health, and to make it their chief ſtudy, added, that it was hard if a man of ſenſe, that took care of his exerciſes and diet, did not better know than any phyſician, what was good or bad for him. Indeed phyſic profeſſes is always to have experience for the touch-ſtone of its operations. And Plato was right when he ſaid, that to be a true phyſician, he who profeſſed that ſcience ſhould firſt himſelf have paſſed through all the diſeaſes he pretends to cure, and through all the accidents and circumſtances whereof he is to judge. It is but reaſon they ſhould get the pox, if they will know how to cure it: for my part, I would chuſe to put myſelf into ſuch hands; for the others only guide us, like him who paints the ſea, rocks, and ports, and draws the model of a ſhip as he ſits ſafe at his table;

* I cannot imagine where Montaigne met with that ſaying of Tiberius, that after the age of 20 years, a man ought to have nothing to do with phyſical remedies. Suetonius only ſays, that Tiberius, after he was 30 years of age governed his health after is own fancy, and without the help and advice of phyſicians. Sueton. in the Life of Tiberius, § 68. And Plutarch tells us in his excellent treatiſe of the Rules and Precepts for Health, that he remembered to have heard, that Tiberius uſed to ſay, that the man who after threeſcore years of age held his hand out to a phyſician to feel his pulſe, deſerved to be laughed at for a fool. Chap. 23. of Amyot's tranſlation.

but

but ſend him to ſea, he knows not what courſe to ſteer. They make ſuch a deſcription of our maladies, as a town-crier does of a loſt horſe, or dog, of ſuch a colour, ſuch a height, ſuch an ear; but bring the animal to him, and he knows him not for all that. God grant that phyſic may one day give me ſome good and viſible relief, namely, when I ſhall cry out in good earneſt.

Tandem efficaci do manus ſcientiæ *.

At length I own the power of thy pill,
And let its operation cure or kill.

The arts that promiſe to keep our bodies and ſouls in health, promiſe a great deal, but there is none that leſs keep their promiſe. And in our times, thoſe that make profeſſion of theſe arts amongſt us, manifeſt the effects of them leſs than all other men. One may ſay of them at the moſt, that they ſell medicinal drugs, but that they are phyſicians a man cannot ſay. I have lived ſo long as to be able to give an account of my practice hitherto. And, for whoever has a mind to read it, as his taſter, I give him this eſſay, of which theſe are ſome articles, as they occur to my memory. I have no cuſtom that has not varied according to accidents; but I record thoſe to which I have been moſt uſed, and that hitherto have had the greateſt poſſeſſion of me.

Montaigne's courſe of life, the ſame in ſickneſs as in health.

My form of life is the ſame in ſickneſs as in health; the ſame bed, the ſame hours, the ſame meats and the ſame liquors ſerve me; I add nothing to them but greater or leſs moderation, according to my ſtrength and appetite. My health conſiſts in maintaining my wonted ſtate without diſturbance. I ſee that ſickneſs deprives me of it on one hand, and if I will be ruled by the phyſicians, they will rob me of it on the other hand; ſo that both by fortune and by art I am put out

† Hor. epode 17. ver. 1.

of my road. I believe nothing more certainly than this, that I cannot be hurt by the uſe of things to which I have been ſo long accuſtomed. It is cuſtom that gives the form to a man's life, as it beſt pleaſes her, who in that is all in all: it is the beverage of Circe that varies our nature how it pleaſes. How many nations, and but a little way from us, think our fear of the ſun's exhalations in a very clear day, that ſo manifeſtly hurt us, ridiculous, and our very watermen and peaſants laugh at it. You make a German ſick if you lay him upon a mattraſs, as you do an Italian if you put him on a feather-bed; and a Frenchman without curtains and a fire. A Spaniſh ſtomach cannot hold out to eat as we can, nor ours to drink like the Swiſs. A German made me very merry at Augſbourg in finding fault with our hearths by the ſame arguments which we commonly make uſe of in decrying their ſtoves: for, to ſay the truth, that ſmothered heat, and the ſcent too of that matter with which they are heated again and again, offend moſt people who are not uſed to them, but not me; yet as to the reſt, this heat being equal, conſtant, and univerſal, without flame, without ſmoke, and without the wind that comes down our chimnies, they may in other reſpects endure compariſon with ours. Why do we not imitate the Roman architecture? For, they ſay, that anciently fires were not made in their houſes, but on the outſide, and at the bottom of them, from whence the heat was conveyed to the whole fabric by pipes contrived in the wall, which were drawn twining about the rooms that were to be warmed: which I have ſeen plainly deſcribed ſomewhere in Seneca. This German gentleman hearing me commend the conveniencies and beauties of his city, which truly deſerves it, began to pity me that I was to go away. And the firſt inconvenience he alledged to me was, the dizzineſs which the chimneys elſewhere brought upon me. He had heard ſome one make this complaint, and fixed it upon us, he being by cuſtom deprived of the means of perceiving it in his houſe. All heat that comes from fire

fire makes me weak and dull, and yet Evenus said, that fire was the best condiment of life. I rather chuse any other way of making myself warm. We are afraid to drink our wines when towards the bottom of the vessel; in Portugal those fumes are reputed delicate, and is the beverage of princes. In fine, every nation has several customs and usances, that are not only unknown, but savage and miraculous to some others. What should we do with those people who admit of no testimonies, if not printed, who believe not men if not in a book, nor truth, if not of competent age? We dignify our fopperies when we commit them to the press. It is of a great deal more weight to him you speak of, to say, "I have seen "such a thing," than if you only say, "I have heard "such a thing." But I, who no more disbelieve a man's mouth than his pen, and who know that men write as indiscreetly as they speak, and that esteem this age as much as one that is past, do as soon quote a friend of my acquaintance as Aulus Gellius or Macrobius, and what I have seen, as what they have writ. And, as it is held of virtue, that it is not greater for having continued longer, so do I hold of truth, that for being older it is not wiser. I often say, that is mere folly that makes us run after strange and and scholastic examples? Their fertility is the same now that it was in the time of Homer and Plato. But it is not that we derive more honour from the quotation than from the truth of the discourse? As if it were to borrow our proof from the shops of Vascosan or of Plantin, than of what is to be seen in our own village: or else indeed, that we have not the wit to cull out and make useful what we see before us, and judge of it lively enough to draw it into example. For if we say that we want authority to procure faith to our testimony, we speak from the purpose, forasmuch as, in my opinion, of the most ordinary, common, and known things, could we but find out their light, the greatest miracles

Palled wine in esteem in Portugal.

of

of nature might be formed, and the moſt wonderful examples, eſpecially upon the ſubject of human actions. Now upon the ſubject I am ſpeaking of, ſetting aſide the examples I have gathered from books, and what Ariſtotle ſays of Andron the Argian, that he travelled over the arid ſands of Libya without drinking; a gentleman who has very well behaved himſelf in ſeveral employments, ſaid, in a place where I was, that he had rid from Madrid to Liſbon in the heat of ſummer, without any drink at all; he is very healthful, and vigorous for his age, and hath nothing extraordinary in the uſance of his life, but this, to live ſometimes two or three months, nay, a whole year, without drinking. He is ſometimes athirſt, but he lets it paſs over, and holds, it is an appetite which eaſily goes off of itſelf, and drinks more out of humour than either for need or pleaſure. Here is another example: it is not long ago that I found one of the moſt learned men in France, among thoſe of the greateſt fortunes ſtudying in a corner of a hall that they had ſeparated for him with tapeſtry, and about him a rabble of his ſervants, that you may be ſure were rude and loud enough. He told me, and Seneca ſays almoſt the ſame of himſelf, he made an advantage of this noiſe; as if beaten with this rattle, he ſo much the better recollected and retired himſelf into himſelf for contemplation, and that this tempeſt of voices repercuſſed his thoughts within himſelf. Being at Padua, he had his ſtudy ſo long ſituated in the rattle of coaches, and the tumult of the public place, that he not only formed himſelf to the contempt, but even to the uſe of noiſe, for the ſervice of his ſtudies. Socrates anſwered Alcibiades, who being aſtoniſhed at his patience, aſked him how he could endure the perpetual ſcolding of his wife, "Why," ſaid he, "as thoſe do who are accuſtomed to the ordinary noiſe "of wheels to draw water." I am quite otherwiſe; I have a tender head, a brain very volatile; and when it

is bent upon any one thing, the leaſt buzzing of a fly tears it into pieces. Seneca *, in his youth, having, by the example of Sextius, formed a poſitive reſolution of eating nothing that had life, paſſed over a whole year without it, as he ſaid, with pleaſure, and only returned to animal food, that he might not be ſuſpected of taking up this rule from ſome new religion by which it was preſcribed. But he took up, however, from the precepts of Attalus, a cuſtom, not to lie any more upon ſoft bedding, but even to his old age made uſe of ſuch as would not yield to any preſſure. What the cuſtom of his time denominated roughneſs, ours treats as effeminacy. Do but obſerve the difference betwixt the way of living of my labourers, and that of mine; the Scythians and the Indians have nothing more remote both from my force and method. I know very well, that I have picked up beggar-boys to ſerve me, who ſoon after have quitted both my kitchen and livery, only that they might return to their former courſe of life: and I found one afterwards gathering muſcles out of the ſink for his dinner, whom I could neither by intreaties nor threats, reclaim from the ſweetneſs and reliſh he found in indigence. Beggars have their grandeur and delights, as well as the rich; and it is ſaid, their particular dignities and politics. Theſe are the effects of cuſtom, which can mould us not only into what form ſhe pleaſes, (and yet the ſages ſay, we ought to apply ourſelves to the beſt, which ſhe would ſoon make eaſy to us) but alſo to change and variation, which is the moſt noble and moſt uſeful of her documents. The beſt of my bodily perfections is, that I am flexible and not very obſtinate. I have ſome inclinations more proper and ordinary, and more agreeable than others; but I deviate from them with very little trouble, and eaſily ſlip into a contrary courſe. A young man ought to croſs his own rules to awake his vigour, and to keep it from growing mouldy and ruſty. There is no courſe of life ſo

* Seneca, epiſt. 108.

weak

weak and ſottiſh, as that which is carried on by rule and diſcipline.

Ad primum lapidem vectari cùm placet, horâ
Sumitur ex libro; ſi prurit frictus ocelli
Angulus, inſpectâ geneſi collyria quærit *.

If but a mile he travel out of town
The planetary hour muſt firſt be known;
If he but rub the corner of his eye,
He chuſes ſalve by his nativity.

He will often relapſe into exceſſes, if he will take my word for it; otherwiſe the leaſt debauch ruins him. He renders himſelf uneaſy, and diſagreeable in converſation. The worſt quality in a well-bred man is delicacy, and being attached to a certain particular form; and it is particular, if not pliable and ſupple. It is a kind of reproach, not to be able, or not to dare to do what he ſees others do. Let ſuch as thoſe ſit at home. It is in every man indecent, but in a ſoldier vicious and intolerable; who, as Philopœmen ſaid, ought to accuſtom himſelf to all variety, and inequality of life.

The cuſtoms to which Montaigne was a ſlave in his old age.

Though I have been brought up as much as was poſſible to liberty and indifference, yet ſo it is, that through this indifference, by growing old, and having more ſettled upon certain forms (my age is now paſt inſtruction, and I have henceforward nothing to do but to take care of it as well as I can) cuſtom has already, ere I was aware, ſo imprinted its character in me, in certain things, that I look upon it as a kind of exceſs to depart from them. And, without a force upon myſelf, I cannot ſleep in the day-time, or eat between meals, nor breakfaſt, nor go to bed, without a great interval, as of three hours after ſupper; nor get children till I have ſlept, and never ſtanding upon my feet, nor endure to put myſelf in a ſweat, nor

* Juven. ſat. 6. ver. 576.

quench

quench my thirſt either with pure water or wine, nor keep my head long bare, nor have it ſhaved after dinner; and I would be as uneaſy without my gloves, as without my ſhirt, or without waſhing when I riſe from table, or out of my bed; and could not lie without a canopy and curtains, as neceſſary things: I could dine without a table-cloth, but not without a clean napkin, after the German faſhion. I foul them more than they, or the Italians do, and make but little uſe either of ſpoon or fork. I am ſorry that the ſame is not in uſe amongſt us, that I ſee at the tables of kings; which is, to change our napkins at every ſervice, as they do our plates. We are told of that laborious ſoldier Marius, that growing old, he became nice in his drinking, and never drank but out of a peculiar cup of his own. I, in like manner, fancy glaſſes of a certain form, and do not willingly drink in a common glaſs with others: all metal offends me compared with matter clear and tranſparent: let my eyes taſte too, as far as they can. I owe ſeveral ſuch delicacies to cuſtom. Nature has alſo on the other hand, helped me to ſome of hers, as no longer to be able to endure two full meals in one day, without overcharging my ſtomach, nor a total abſtinence from one of thoſe meals, without filling myſelf with wind, furring my mouth, and blunting my appetite. I alſo diſlike the evening air. For of late years, in marches, which often happen to be all night long, after five or ſix hours, my ſtomach begins to be queaſy, with a violent pain in my head, ſo that I always vomit before day-break. When others go to breakfaſt I go to ſleep, and when I riſe am as briſk as before. I had always been told, that the dews never fell but in the beginning of the night; but for certain years paſt, after long and familiar acquaintance with a lord poſſeſſed with the opinion, that the air is more ſharp and dangerous about the declining of the ſun, an hour or two before it ſets, which he carefully avoids, and deſpiſes that of the night; he had almoſt brought me into his opinion. What, ſhall the very doubt and enquiry ſtrike our imagination ſo far as to alter us? Such as on a ſudden

give

give way to their propenſities, bring entire ruin upon themſelves. And I am ſorry for ſeveral gentlemen, who, through the folly of their phyſicians, have in their youth and ſtrength brought themſelves into conſumptions. It were even yet better to endure a cough, than by diſuſe for ever to loſe the commerce of common life in an action of ſo great utility. Ill-natured ſcience, to put us out of conceit with the moſt pleaſant hours of the day: let us keep poſſeſſion of it to the laſt. For the moſt part a man hardens himſelf by being obſtinate, and corrects his conſtitution; as Cæſar did the falling-ſickneſs, by dint of contempt. A man ſhould addict himſelf to the beſt rules, but not inſlave himſelf to them; yet there is one to which a ſlaviſh attachment is uſeful.

The care that Montaigne took to keep his body open.

Both kings and philoſophers go to ſtool, and ladies too; public lives are bound to ceremony; mine that is obſcure and private, enjoys all natural diſpenſation. Soldier and Gaſcon are alſo characters a little ſubject to indiſcretion in this point; wherefore I ſhall ſay of this action, that it is neceſſary to refer it to certain preſcribed and nocturnal hours, and to force a man's ſelf to it by cuſtom, as I have done; but not to ſubject himſelf, as I have done in my declining years, to look out for a particular convenience of place and ſeat for that purpoſe, and making it troubleſome by long ſitting: yet in the fouleſt offices, is it not in ſome meaſure excuſable to require more care and cleanlineſs? *Natura homo mundum, et elegans animal eſt*; "man is by nature a clean and elegant creature *." Of all the actions of nature, I hate moſt the being interrupted in that. I have ſeen many ſoldiers troubled with an irregular call, whilſt I and my belly never fail of our punctual aſſignation, which is at leaping out of bed, if ſome violent buſineſs, or ſickneſs do not moleſt us.

The ſureſt courſe to be taken by valetudinarians.

I do not think therefore, as I ſaid before, that valetudinarians can be ſafer than by keeping cloſe to that courſe of life wherein they had been bred and

* Seneca, epiſt. 92.

trained

trained up. Alteration, be it what it will, proves hurtful. Can you believe that cheſtnuts can hurt a Perigourdin, or one of Lucca; or milk and cheeſe the mountaineers? Men enjoin them not only a new, but a contrary method of life, a change which a man in health could not endure. To preſcribe water to a native of Bretagne of threeſcore and ten; to ſhut a ſeaman up in a ſtove, and to forbid a footman to walk, is to deprive them of motion, and at laſt of air and light.

——— *an vivere tanti eſt?*
Cogimur a ſuetis animum ſuſpendere rebus,
Atque ut vivamus vivere deſinimus.
Hoc ſupereſſe reor quibus et ſpirabilis aer
Et lux qua regimur, redditur ipſa gravis *.

To human life a gift of ſo much price
When our old habits we muſt ſacrifice,
And live no longer, — to live otherwiſe?
I can't imagine that they longer live,
To whom nor light, nor air does comfort give.

If they do no other good, they do this at leaſt, that they prepare patients betimes for death, by little and little undermining and curtailing the uſage of life.

Montaigne whether well or ſick indulged his natural appetites.

Both well and ſick, I have ever willingly gratified the appetites that preſt upon me. I give great authority to my propenſities and deſires. I do not love to cure one diſeaſe by another. I hate remedies that are more troubleſome than the diſeaſe. To be ſubject to the ſtone, and ſubject to abſtain from the pleaſure of eating oyſters, are two evils inſtead of one. The diſeaſe torments us on the one hand, and the proſcription on the other. Since we are ever in danger of miſtaking, let us rather run a hazard by the continuance of pleaſure. The world proceeds quite contrary, and

* Gallus, eleg. i. ver. 55——255.

thinks

thinks nothing profitable that is not painful; eaſe ſtands ſuſpected by it. My appetite is in ſeveral things of itſelf happily enough accommodated to the health of my ſtomach. Acrimony and quickneſs in ſauces were pleaſant to me when young, but my ſtomach diſliking them, my taſte for them ſoon went off. Wine is hurtful to ſick people; and it is the firſt thing that my mouth diſreliſhes when I am ſick, and with an invincible diſguſt. Whatever I take againſt my liking does me harm; but nothing hurts me that I eat with appetite and delight; I never received harm by any action that was very pleaſant to me; and accordingly have made all medicinal concluſions give entire precedency to my pleaſure. And, when I was young,

Quem circumcurſans hùc, atque hùc ſæpe Cupido
Fulgebat crocinâ ſplendidus in tunica *.

Whilſt Cupid round me fluttering did fly,
In his gay mantle of the Tyrian dye.

I gave myſelf the reins as licentiouſly and raſhly as any body elſe to my then governing paſſion.

Et militavi non ſine gloria †.

And in the ſervice of beauty I gallantly fought.

yet more in continuance and holding out, than in a ſally.

Sex me vix memini ſuſtinuiſſe vices ‡.

* Catullus, carm. 56. ver. 133. † Hor. lib. iii. ode 26. ver. 2.
‡ Ovid. Amor. lib. iii. eleg. 7. ver. 26. Some very curious enquirers will blame me for not having explained this little verſe; and there are others whom I rather choſe to keep fair with, would give me a rap on the knuckles if I had. All I can do to oblige the firſt, is to refer them to Fontaine's Tale de Berceau, ver. 246.

It

It is certainly a misfortune, and a miracle at once, to confess at what a tender age I was first subjected to love: it was indeed by chance; for it was long before the years of choice or discretion: I do not remember myself so long ago. My fortune may very well be compared to that of Quartilla *, who could not remember when she lost her virginity.

Inde tragus celeresque pili, mirandaque matri
Barba mea †.

Therefore my beard budded early to my mother's admiration.

Physicians commonly submit their rules to the violent longings that happen to sick persons, with very good success. This great desire, strange and vicious as it is, it cannot be imagined, but that nature must have a hand in it. And then how easy a thing is it to satisfy the fancy? In my opinion, this part wholly carries it, at least, above all the rest. The most grievous and common evils are those that fancy loads us with. This Spanish saying pleases me in several senses; *Defienda me dios de my*; "God defend me from myself." I am sorry when I am sick, that I have not some longing that might give me the contentment of satisfying it; physic would hardly be able to divert me from it. I do the same when I am well. I can think of very little more than to hope or wish. It is pity a man should be so weak and languishing, as to have nothing left him but wishing.

The uncertainty of physick gives a sanction to most of our longings.

The art of physic is not so solidly established as to leave us without authority for whatever we do; according to Fernelius and Scala it changes according to the climates and moons. If your physician does not think it good for you to

* Petronius, p. 17. the Paris edit. an. 1587.

† Martial, lib. xi. ep. 23. ver. 7. and 8.

ſleep, to drink wine, or to eat ſuch and ſuch meats, never trouble yourſelf, I will find you another that ſhall not be of his opinion; the diverſity of phyſical arguments and opinions includes all ſorts of methods. I ſaw a miſerable ſick perſon panting and burning with thirſt, in order that he might be cured; who was afterwards laughed at by another phyſician, who condemned that advice as hurtful to him: did he not torment himſelf to good purpoſe? A man of that profeſſion is lately dead of the ſtone, who had made trial of extreme abſtinence to contend with his diſeaſe. His fellow phyſicians ſaid, that on the contrary, this abſtinence had dried his body up, and baked the gravel in his kidneys.

Why talking was hurtful to Montaigne in his ſickneſs.

I have obſerved, that both in wounds and ſickneſſes, ſpeaking diſcompoſes and hurts me as much as any irregularity I can commit. My voice ſpends and tires me, for it is loud and ſtrained; ſo what when I have gone to whiſper ſome great perſons about affairs of conſequence, they have oft deſired me to moderate my voice.

A ſhort digreſſion on the manner of regulating the voice in converſation.

This ſtory juſtifies a digreſſion here. A perſon in a certain Greek ſchool *, ſpeaking loud as I do, the maſter of the ceremonies ſent to him to ſpeak ſoftly, "tell "him then he muſt ſend me," replied the other, "the tone he would have me ſpeak in." To which the other replied, "that he ſhould take the tone "from the ear of him to whom he ſpake." This was well ſaid, if he meant, "ſpeak according to the affair "you are ſpeaking about to your auditor:" for if it mean, "it is ſufficient that he hears you; or govern your-"ſelf by him;" I do not think it to be reaſon. The tone and motion of the voice carries with it a great deal of the expreſſion and ſignification of my meaning, and it is I who am to govern it, to make myſelf underſtood. There is a voice to inſtruct, a voice to flatter, and a voice to reprehend. I will not only that my voice reach him, but perhaps that it ſtrike and pierce him. When I rattle my

* This was Carneades the Academic philoſopher, ſee Diog. Laert. lib. iv. ſect. 63.

foot-

footman with a sharp and bitter tone, it would be very pretty for him to say, "pray master, speak lower, I hear you "very well." *Est quædam vox ad auditum accommodata, non magnitudine, sed proprietate*; "there is a certain voice "accommodated to the hearing, not by the loudness, "but propriety *." Speech is half his that speaks, and half his that hears; the last of which ought to prepare himself to received it, according to the bias it takes Like tennis players, he that receives the ball, shifts and prepares, according as he sees him move who strikes the ball, and according to the stroke itself.

Distempers have their periods, which we must wait for with patience.

Experience has moreover taught me this, that we ruin ourselves with impatience. Evils have their life and limits, their diseases, and their recovery; the constitution of maladies is formed by the pattern of the constitution of animals; they have their fortunes and days limited from their birth. Whoever attempts imperiously to cut them short by force in the middle of their course, does lengthen and multiply them, and incenses instead of appeasing them. I am of Crantor's opinion that we are neither obstinately and wilfully to oppose evils, nor truckle under them for want of courage, but that we are naturally to give way to them, according to their condition and our own; we ought to let diseases take their course: and I find they stay less with me, who let them alone. I have lost those which are reputed the most tenacious and obstinate, without any help or art, and contrary to the physician's rules. Let us a little permit nature to operate; she understands her own affairs better than we. But such a one died, and so shall you, if not of that disease, of another. And how many have nevertheless died, who have had three physicians to attend them? Example is a mirror, vague and universal, and in all senses. If it be a pleasant medicine, take it, it is always so much present good. I will never stick at the name nor the colour, if it be grateful to the palate: pleasure is one of the chief kinds of profit. I have suffered

* Quintilian Institut. Orat. lib. xi. cap. 3.

rheums, gouty defluxions, diarrheas, palpitations of the heart, megrims, and other accidents, to grow old, and die away in me, which I have been rid of when I was half fit to nouriſh them. They are ſooner wrought upon by courteſy that bravado; we muſt patiently ſuffer the laws of our condition, we are born to grow old, to grow weak, and to be ſick in deſpite of all medicine. It is the firſt leſſon the Mexicans teach their children; ſo ſoon as ever they come out of their mother's wombs, they thus ſalute them, "thou art come into the world, child, to "endure; endure therefore, ſuffer, and be ſilent." It is injuſtice to lament that that is fallen out to any one, which may befall every one. *Indignare ſi quid in te inique, propriè conſtitutum eſt* *; "then be angry, when there is "any thing unjuſtly decreed againſt thee alone."

What cannot be avoided muſt be endured with patience.

See an old man who begs of God that he will maintain his health vigorous and entire, that is to ſay, that he will reſtore him to youth:

Stulte, quid hæc fruſtra votis puerilibus optas †?

In vain thou fool are all thy childiſh pray'rs.

Is it not folly? his condition is not capable of it. The gout, the ſtone, and indigeſtion, are ſymptoms of long years, as heat, rains and winds, are of long voyages. Plato ‡ does not believe that Æſculapius troubled himſelf to provide by a regimen for prolonging life in a weak and waſted body, uſeleſs to his country, and to his profeſſion, and to beget healthful and robuſt children; and he does not think this ſolicitude ſuitable to the divine juſtice and prudence, which is to direct all things to utility. My good friend, your buſineſs is done, no-body

* Seneca, epiſt. 91. † Ovid, Triſt. lib. iii. eleg. 8. ver. 11.
‡ De Republica, lib. iii. p. 623.

can

can reſtore you, they can at the moſt but patch you up, and prop you a little, and prolong your miſery an hour or two.

Non ſecus inſtantem cupiens fulcire ruinam,
Diverſis contra nititur obicibus,
Donec certa dies, omni compage ſoluta,
Ipſum cum rebus ſubruat auxilium *.

Like one, who willing to defer a while
A ſudden ruin, props the tott'ring pile,
Till in ſhort ſpace the houſe, the props and all
Together with a dreadful ruin fall.

We muſt learn to ſuffer what we cannot avoid. Our life, like the harmony of the world, is compoſed of contrary things, alſo of ſeveral notes, ſweet and harſh, ſharp and flat, ſpritely and ſolemn; and the muſician who would only affect one of theſe, what would he be able to ſay? He muſt know how to make uſe of them all, and to mix them; and we likewiſe the goods and evils which are congenial with our life: our being cannot ſubſiſt without this mixture, and the one tribe is no leſs neceſſary to it than the other. To attempt to kick againſt natural neceſſity, is to repreſent the folly of Cteſiphon, who undertook to kick with his mule.

Why Montaigne avoided to conſult phyſicians.

I conſult little about the alterations I feel; for thoſe people take advantage when they have you at their mercy. They cudgel your ears with their prognoſtics; and having formerly ſurpriſed me, weakened with ſickneſs, injuriouſly handled me with their doctrines and magiſterial taunts; one while menacing me with great pains, and another with approaching death; by which threats I was indeed moved and ſhaken, but not dejected, nor juſtled from my place; and though my judgment was

* Gallus, eleg. ver. 173, &c.

neither altered nor distracted, yet it was at least embarrassed by it. It is always agitation and struggle.

He loved to flatter his imagination in his illness.

Now I use my imagination as gently as I can, and would discharge it of all trouble and contest, if I could. A man must assist, flatter, and deceive it, if he can. My mind is fit for that office. It wants no appearances throughout. And could it persuade, as it preaches, it would successfully relieve me. Will you have an example? It tells me that it is for my good to have the stone: that structures of my age are naturally to suffer some ruin: that it is now time they should begin to disjoint, and to confess a decay; it is a common necessity, and there was no new miracle to be wrought for me: I thereby pay what is due to old age, and I cannot expect a better account of it: that society ought to comfort me being fallen into the most common infirmity of men of my age*. I see every where men tormented with the same disease: and am honoured by their fellowship, as men of the best quality are most frequently afflicted with it; it is a noble and dignified disease. That of such as are afflicted with it, few have it to a less degree of pain, and yet they are put to the trouble of a wretched regimen, and the daily taking of nauseous drugs; whereas I owe my better state purely to my good fortune. For some ordinary broths of eringos, and burst-wort, that I have twice or thrice taken to oblige the ladies, who, with greater kindness than my pain, would needs present me half of theirs, seemed to me equally easy to take, and fruitless in operation. They have a thousand vows to make to Æsculapius, and as many crowns to pay to their physician, for the voiding gravel easily and plentifully, which I often do by the benefit of nature. Even the decency of my countenance is not disturbed by it in company; and I can hold my water ten hours, and as long as any man that is in perfect health. The fear

The stone ordinary in old men especially men of quality.

* Dulce eſt miſeris ſocios habuiſſe dŏloris.

of

of this diſeaſe ſays one, did formerly affright thee, when it was unknown to thee; the crying and roaring of thoſe that make it worſe by their impatience, begot a horror in thee: it is an infirmity that puniſhes the members by which thou haſt moſt offended: thou art a conſcientious fellow;

Quæ venit indignè pœna, dolenda venit *.

To guiltleſs ſuff'rers our regret is due.

Conſider this chaſtiſement, it is very eaſy in compariſon of that of others, and inflicted with a paternal tenderneſs: do but obſerve how late it comes; it only ſeizes and incommodes that ſtage of thy life, which is upon the matter ſteril, and loſt; having, as it were by compoſition, given way to the licentiouſneſs and pleaſures of thy youth. The fear and the compaſſion that people have of this diſeaſe, ſerves thee for matter of pride. A quality whereof, if thou haſt thy judgment purified, and thy reaſon be right and ſound, thy friends will yet notwithſtanding, diſcover ſome tincture in thy complexion. It is pleaſure to hear it ſaid of a man's ſelf, "here is a great fortitude, here is great patience!" Thou art ſeen to ſweat with the exceſſive pain, to look pale and red, to tremble, to vomit blood, to ſuffer ſtrange contractions and convulſions, by ſtarts to let tears drop from thine eyes, to make thick, black, and dreadful urine, or to have it ſuppreſſed by ſome ſharp and jagged ſtone, that cruelly pricks and tears the neck of the bladder, whilſt thou entertaineſt the company with thy uſual countenance, drolling by fits with thy ſervants, making one in a continued diſcourſe, now and then excuſing thy pain, and making thy ſufferance leſs than it is. Does it put thee in mind of the men of paſt times, who ſo greedily ſought diſeaſes to keep their virtue in breath and exerciſe? Put the caſe that nature inclines and

* Ovid. epiſt. 5. ver. 8.

forces thee to that glorious ſchool, into which thou wouldſt never have entered, of thy own free will. If thou tellſt me, that it is a dangerous and mortal diſeaſe; what diſeaſes are not? For it is a phyſical cheat to except any, and to ſay, that they do not tend directly to death: what matter is it, if they ſteer that way by accident, and if they ſlide and wheel gently into the path that leads to it? But thou doſt not die becauſe thou art ſick, thou dieſt becauſe thou art living. Death actually kills thee without the help of ſickneſs: and to ſome, ſickneſs has deferred death, who have lived the longer by reaſon that they thought themſelves always dying. To which may be added, that as of wounds, ſo of diſeaſes, ſome are medicinal and wholeſome. The cholic is oft no leſs long-lived than you. We know men with whom it has continued from their infancy, even to extreme old age, and if they had not parted company, it would have attended them longer ſtill; you oftner kill it than it kills you: and though it preſent you the image of approaching death, were it not a good office to a man of ſuch an age, to put him in mind of his latter end? What is worſe, thou haſt no longer any thing that ſhould make thee deſire to be cured. Common neceſſity will however preſently call thee away. Do but conſider how artfully and gently ſhe puts thee out of conceit with life, and weans thee from the world; not compelling thee with a tyrannical ſubjection, as by many other infirmities which you ſee old men afflicted with, that hold them in continual torment, and keep them in perpetual and inceſſant pains and infirmities; but by warnings and inſtructions at ſeveral intervals, intermixing long pauſes of repoſe, as it were to give thee ſcope to meditate and ruminate upon thy leſſon at thy leiſure; in order to enable thee to judge aright, and to aſſume the reſolution of a man of courage, ſhe preſents to thee the entire ſtate of thy condition, both in good and evil, and with a very chearful, and an inſupportable life, alternately in one and the ſame day. If thou embraceſt not death, at leaſt thou ſhakeſt

hands

hands with it once a month; by which thou haſt more cauſe to hope that it will one day ſurpriſe thee without warning; and that being ſo oft conducted to the water-ſide, and thinking thyſelf to be ſtill upon the accuſtomed terms, thou and thy confidence will at one time or another be unexpectedly wafted over *. A man has no reaſon to complain of diſeaſes that fairly divide the time with health. I am obliged to fortune for having ſo often aſſaulted me with the ſame ſort of weapons; ſhe forms and faſhions me by uſage, and hardens and habituates me ſo to her attacks that I can know within a little, for how much I ſhall be quit. For want of natural memory, I make one of paper; and as any new ſymptom happens in my diſeaſe, I write it down; from whence it falls out, that being now almoſt paſt through all ſorts of examples, if any aſtoniſhment threaten me, tumbling over theſe little looſe notes, like the Sibyls leaves, I never fail of finding matter of conſolation from ſome favourable prognoſtic in my paſt experience. Cuſtom alſo makes me hope better for the time to come. For the conduct of this evacuation having ſo long continued, it is to believed that nature will not alter her courſe, and that no other worſe accident will happen than what I already feel. Beſides, the condition of this diſeaſe is not unſuitable to my forward and haſty complexion. When it aſſaults me gently, I am afraid, for it is then for a great while; but it has naturally briſk and vigorous exceſſes. It claws me to purpoſe for a day or two. My reins held out an age without alteration, and I have almoſt now lived another ſince they changed their ſtate. Evils have their periods as well as benefit, perhaps this infirmity draws towards an end. Age weakens the heat of my ſtomach, the digeſtion of which being leſs perfect, it ſends this crude matter to my reins; and why at a certain revolution may not the

* This ſeems to be an alluſion to what was fabled by the ancient Greeks and Romans, that the dead were tranſported over the river Styx in Charon's ferry boat; a fancy with which we ſtill adorn our poetry, and ſometimes adopt in proſe too in our familiar converſation.

heat

heat of my reins be alſo abated, ſo that they can no longer petrify my phlegm, and nature pave the way for ſome other manner of purgation. Years have evidently helped me to drain certain rheums; and why not thoſe excrements which furniſh matter for gravel? but is there any thing ſweet in compariſon of this ſudden change, when from an exceſſive pain, I come, by the voiding of a ſtone, to recover, as from a flaſh of lightning, the beautiful light of health, ſo free and full as it happens in our ſudden and the ſharpeſt fits of the cholic: is there any thing in the pain ſuffered, that can compare to the pleaſure of ſo ſudden an amendment? Oh! how much more pleaſant does health ſeem to me after ſickneſs ſo near and contiguous to each other, as that I can diſtinguiſh them in the preſence of one another in their beſt ſtate, when they vie with one another, as it were, which ſhall have the maſtery! What the Stoics ſay, that vices are profitably introduced, to give value and ſupport to virtue; we can with better reaſon, and leſs hazard of cenſure, ſay of nature, that ſhe has given us pain for the honour and ſervice of pleaſure and indolence. When Socrates, after his fetters were knocked off, felt the pleaſure of that itching which the weight of them had cauſed in his legs, he rejoiced to conſider the ſtrict alliance betwixt pain and pleaſure, how they are linked together by a neceſſary connexion, ſo that by turns they follow and mutually beget one another; and cried out to Æſop, that he ought from this conſideration, to have taken a ſubject proper for a fine fable.

Health more pleaſant after ſickneſs.

The worſt that I ſee in other diſeaſes is, that they are not ſo grievous in their operation, as they are in their iſſue. A man is a whole year in recovering, and all the while full of weakneſs and fear. So dangerous and gradual is the recovery of health, that there is no end of it. Before you are allowed to throw off a handkerchief, and then a cap, before they allow you to take the air, to drink wine, lie with your wife, and eat melons, it is odd if you relapſe not into ſome new diſtemper.

The advantage of the ſtone above all other diſtempers.

temper. The ſtone has this privilege, that it carries itſelf clean off, whereas others always leave behind them ſome impreſſion and alteration, which renders the body ſubject to ſome new diſeaſe, and lend a hand to one another.

It produces ſome conſequences that are of ſervice.

Thoſe are excuſable, that content themſelves with poſſeſſion of us, without extending it farther, and introducing their conſequences: but courteous and kind are ſuch whoſe departure brings us any profitable iſſue. Since I have been troubled with the ſtone, I find myſelf freed from all other accidents, much more methinks than I was before, and have never had any fever ſince. I argue, that the extreme and frequent vomitings that I am ſubject to, purge me: and on the other ſide, my loathings, and the ſtrange faſts I am forced to keep, digeſt my preſent humours; and nature in thoſe ſtones, voids whatever there is in me that is ſuperfluous and hurtful. Let it never be ſaid that this is a medicine too dear bought. For to what purpoſe are ſo many ſtinking apozemes, cauſtics, inciſions, ſweats, ſetons, diets, and ſo many other methods of cure, which oft, by reaſon we are not able to undergo their violence and importunity, bring us to our graves? So that when I am ſeized with the ſtone, I look upon it as phyſic; when freed from it, I think it an entire deliverance.

There is likewiſe another particular benefit of my diſeaſe; which is, that it moſt plays its game by itſelf, and lets me play mine, or elſe I only want courage to do it; for in its greateſt fury, I have endured it ten hours together on horſeback; do but have patience, you need no other regimen; play, dine, run, do this and the other thing too if you can; your debauch will do you more good than harm. Say as much to one that has the pox, the gout, or a rupture: the other diſeaſes have more univerſal obligations, rack our actions after another manner, diſturb our whole ſyſtem, and to their conſideration engage the whole ſtate of life. This only pinches the ſkin, it leaves the underſtanding and will wholly at your diſpoſal, as alſo the tongue, hands,

and

and feet. It rather awakes than ſtupifies you. The mind is ſtruck with the burning heat of a fever, overwhelmed with an epilepſy, diſtracted by a ſharp megrim, and finally aſtoniſhed by all diſeaſes that hurt the whole maſs, and the moſt noble parts: this never attacks the ſoul. If any thing goes amiſs with her, it is her own fault, ſhe betrays, diſmounts, and abandons herſelf. There are none but fools who ſuffer themſelves to be perſuaded, that this hard and maſſy body, which is baked in our kidneys, is to be diſſolved by draughts: wherefore, when it is once ſtirred, there is nothing to be done but to give it paſſage, and indeed it will force it of itſelf.

I likewiſe obſerve this particular convenience in it, that it is a diſeaſe wherein we have little to gueſs at. We are free from the trouble into which other diſeaſes throw us, by the uncertainty of their cauſes, conditions, and progreſs. A trouble that is infinitely painful. We have no need of conſultation and doctoral interpretations, the ſenſes well enough inform us what it is, and where it is. By ſuch-like arguments, both weak and ſtrong, as Cicero did the diſeaſe of his old age, I try to lull, and amuſe my imagination, and to ſoothe its wounds. If I find them worſe to-morrow, I will provide new ſtratagems. True it is, I am come to that paſs of late, that the leaſt motion forces pure blood out of my kidneys: and what of that? I ſtir nevertheleſs as before, ride after my hounds with a juvenile ardour, and find that I have very good ſatisfaction for an accident of that importance, when it coſts me no more but a ſtupor and alteration in that part. It is ſome great ſtone that waſtes and conſumes the ſubſtance of my kidneys, and of my life, which by little and little evaporates, not without ſome natural pleaſure, as an excrement henceforward ſuperfluous and troubleſome. Now, if I feel any thing to roll, do not expect that I ſhould trouble myſelf to conſult my pulſe or my urine, thereby to put myſelf upon ſome uneaſy forethought; I ſhall ſoon enough feel the pain, without making it longer by the diſeaſe of fear. He who fears to ſuffer, already ſuffers what he fears. To which may

be

be added, that the doubts and ignorance of those who take upon them to explain the springs of nature, with her internal progressions, and the many false prognostics of their art, ought to give us to understand, that her ways are utterly unknown.

The guessing at diseases by urine very uncertain.

There is great uncertainty, variety, and obscurity, in what she either promises or threatens; old age excepted, which is an undoubted sign of the approach of death. In all other accidents I see few signs of the futurity, whereon we may ground our divination. I only judge myself by my real sensation, and not by discourse: to what end? since I am resolved to bring nothing to it but expectation and patience. Will you know how much I get by this? Observe those that do otherwise, and who rely upon so many different persuasions and counsels, how oft, and how much they labour under imagination, exclusive of any bodily pain. I have many times pleased myself, being well when I have been safe, and delivered from these dangerous accidents, to communicate them to the physicians, as if they were then beginning to discover themselves in me; where I underwent the terrible sentences of their dreadful conclusions, being very well at ease; and I was the more obliged to the favour of God, and better satisfied of the vanity of this art.

Montaigne a great sleeper.

There is nothing that ought so much to be recommended to youth as activity and vigilance. Our life is nothing but motion: I bestir myself with great difficulty, and am slow in every thing, whether in rising, going to bed, or eating. Seven of the clock in the morning is early for me; and where I govern, I never dine before eleven, nor sup till after six. I have formerly attributed the cause of the fevers, and other diseases I have fallen into, to the heaviness and dullness that long sleeping had brought upon me, and have ever repented my sleeping again in the morning. Plato is more angry at the excess of sleeping than that of drinking: I love to lie hard, and alone, even without my wife, as kings and princes do, but pretty well covered with cloaths. They never warm my bed, but since my being grown old, they give me for need warm cloths to

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lay to my feet and ſtomach. The great Scipio, was branded for a great ſleeper; though in my opinion, for no other reaſon, but that men were diſpleaſed, that he was the only man in whom no other fault was to be found. If I have any thing delicate in my way of living, it is rather in my lying, than any thing elſe; but generally, I give way, and accommodate myſelf as much as any to neceſſity. Sleeping has taken up a great part of my life, and I yet continue at the age I now am, to ſleep eight or nine hours at a ſtretch.

He corrects that habit in his latter days, and finds the benefit of it.

I wean myſelf to my advantage, from this propenſity to ſloth, and am evidently better for ſo doing. I find the change a little hard indeed, but in three days it is over, and ſee but few that live with leſs ſleep, when need requires; and that more conſtantly exerciſe themſelves, nor to whom journies are leſs troubleſome. My body is capable of long continued, but not of a violent or ſudden agitation. I avoid of late all violent exerciſes, and ſuch as incline me to ſweat, my limbs being weary before they are hot. I am uſed to be upon my legs a whole day together, and am never weary of walking: but from my youth, I never loved to ride upon pavement. On foot I go up to the breech in dirt, and indeed little fellows as I am, are ſubject in the ſtreets to be elbowed and juſtled, for want of preſence and ſtature, and I have ever loved to reſt myſelf, whether ſitting or lying, with my heels as high, or higher than my ſeat.

The military profeſſion very pleaſant and honourable.

There is no profeſſion ſo pleaſant as the military, a profeſſion both noble in its execution, (for valour is the ſtrongeſt, moſt ſuperb, and moſt generous of all virtues) and noble in its cauſe. There is no utility either more extenſive, or more juſt, than the protection of the peace and grandeur of a man's country. The company of ſo many noble, young, and active men delights you; as does the ordinary ſight of ſo many tragic ſpectacles; and the freedom of their converſation without art, with a maſculine and unceremonious way of living.

living. The variety of a thouſand different actions; the encouraging harmony of martial muſic, that raviſhes your ears and warms your ſouls; the honour of this exerciſe, nay even its ſeverity and hardſhips, which Plato ſo little accounts, that in his Republic he makes women and children ſhare in them, are delightful to you. You put yourſelves voluntarily upon particular exploits and hazards, according as you judge of their luſtre and importance, and ſee, when even life itſelf is therein excuſably employed,

Pulchrumque mori ſuccurrit in armis *.

How beautiful it is to die in arms.

To fear the common dangers that concern ſo great a multitude of men; not to dare to do what ſo many ſorts of ſouls, and a whole people dare to do, is for a heart that is effeminate, and mean beyond all meaſure. Company encourages even children, If others excel you in knowledge, in gracefulneſs, in ſtrength, or fortune, you have natural cauſes to blame for that, but to give place to them in fortitude of mind, you can blame none but yourſelf. Death is more abject, more languiſhing and painful in bed than in battle; and fevers and catarrhs, are as painful and mortal as a muſquet-ſhot: whoever is formed valiantly to bear the accidents of common life, would need no more courage to be a ſoldier. *Vivere, mi Lucili, militare eſt* †; "life, my Lucilius, is a warfare."

I do not remember that I ever had the itch, yet ſcratching is one of nature's ſweeteſt gratifications, and neareſt at hand, but the ſmart follows too cloſe. I uſe it moſt in my ears, which are often apt to itch.

Montaigne's hale Conſtitution.

I came into the world with all my ſenſes entire, even to perfection. My ſtomach is pretty good, as alſo is my

* Æneid. lib. ii. ver. 317. † Senec. ep. 96.

head

head my breath; and for the moſt part, they have continued themſelves ſo in ſpite of my fevers. I have paſt the age to which ſome nations, not without reaſon, have preſcribed ſo juſt a term of life, that they would not ſuffer men to exceed it; and yet I have ſome intervals, though ſhort and inconſtant, ſo bright, as are little inferior to the health and indolency of my youth: I do not mean vigour and ſpritelineſs, it being not reaſon that it ſhould follow me beyond its limits.

Non hoc amplius eſt liminis, aut aquæ
Cæleſtis patiens latus *.

In life I find it much too late
To ſtand all weathers at her gate.

His mind not much diſturbed by the ailments of the body.

My face and eyes preſently diſcover me. All my alterations begin there, and appear worſe than they really are. My friends oft pity me, before I feel the cauſe in myſelf; my looking-glaſs does not fright me, for even in my youth it has befallen me more than once to change my countenance, to put on a troubled aſpect boding no good, without any great conſequence; inſomuch, that the phyſicians not finding any cauſe within, anſwerable to that outward alteration, attributed it to the mind, and ſome ſecret paſſion that preyed upon my vitals; but they were deceived. If my body governed itſelf as well according to my wiſh, as my mind does, we ſhould move a little more at our eaſe. My mind was then not only free from trouble, but moreover full of ſatisfaction and joy, as it commonly is, half by complexion, and half by deſign.

Nec vitiant artus ægræ contagia mentis †.

* Hor. lib. iii. ode 10. ver. 19. † Ovid. Triſt. lib. iii. el. 8. ver. 24.

——————I never yet could find,
That e'er my body ſuffered by my mind *.

I am of the opinion, that this temperature of my mind, has oft raiſed my body from its lapſes: the latter is often oppreſſed; and if the former be not briſk and gay, it is at leaſt quiet and at reſt. I had a quartan ague four or five months, that made me look wretchedly, while my mind was always, if not calm, yet pleaſant; if the pain be without me, the weakneſs and langour do not much deject me: I have known ſeveral corporal fantings, that are ſhocking ſo much as to name, which yet I would leſs fear than a thouſand paſſions and agitations of mind that I frequently ſee. I reſolve no more to run, it is enough that I crawl along; nor do I complain of the natural decay that I feel in myſelf,

Quis tumidum guttur miratur in Alpibus †?

Who wonders to ſee a ſwell'd neck in the Alps?

nor regret, that my duration ſhall not be as long and entire as that of an oak.

Nor diſordered by the impreſſions of the imagination, his dreams being rather ridiculous than ſad.

I have no reaſon to complain of my imagination, for I have had few thoughts in my life which have ſo much as broke my ſleep, except thoſe of deſire, which have awaked without afflicting me: I dream but ſeldom, and then of chimeras and fantaſtical things, commonly produced from pleaſant thoughts, rather ridiculous than ſad; and believe it to be true, that dreams are the

* Montaigne here interprets Ovid's words in a ſenſe oppoſite to what they carry in that poet; for what he plainly meant to ſay is, that his mind was not a ſufferer by any indiſpoſition of the body.

† Juven. ſat. 13. ver. 162.

true interpreters of our inclinations; but there is art required to sort and understand them.

*Rex, quæ in vitâ usurpant homines, cogitant, curant, vident *, quæque aiunt vigilantes, agitantque, ea si cui in somno accidunt, minus mirum est †.*

"It is no wonder, O king, if what men are accustomed to think, care for, see, and say, when waking, should also run in their heads, when they are asleep."

Plato moreover says, that it is the office of prudence to draw instructions of divination of future things from dreams. I see nothing in it, except the wonderful experiments related of them by Socrates, Xenophon, and Aristotle, all men of irreproachable authority ‡. Historians say, that the people of Atlantis never dream, and that they also never eat any thing that had life. I add, forasmuch as it is perhaps the reason why they never dream; for Pythagoras ordered a certain preparation of diet, to beget proper dreams: mine are very gentle, without any agitation of body, or expression of voice. I have seen several of my time wonderfully disturbed by them; Theon the philosopher walked in his sleep; as also did Pericles his servant, and that upon the very tiles and tops of the house ||.

The Atlantes never dream

* This is taken from a tragedy of Accius, intitled Brutus, where a soothsayer addresses Tarquin the superb, one of the chief dramatis personæ.

† Cicero de Div. lib. i. cap. 22.

‡ Herodot. lib. iv. p. 322.

|| I knew a learned gentleman who affirmed, that the stories of sleep-walkers were true. In Mr. Menage's notes upon this place (in Diogenes Laert. in the life of Pyrrho, lib. ix. sect. 82.) we find a passage of Galen, where this learned physician tells us, that having heard of persons walking in their sleep, he did not believe a word of it, till being obliged once to travel on foot all night long, he was forced to believe it, by his own experience, &c. But according to this principle Galen gives us authority for not believing nothing at all of the matter, till we have experienced it as well as he.

I hardly

I hardly ever chuſe my diſh at table, but fall too on the next at hand, and unwillingly change it for another. The clutter of plates and ſervices diſpleaſes me as much as any other whatever. I am eaſily ſatisfied with little fare, and am an enemy to the opinion of Favorinus, that in a feaſt you muſt ſuffer the meat you like to be ſnatched, and another plate of another ſort to be ſet before you; and that it is a pitiful ſupper, if you do not ſtuff your gueſts with the rumps of various fowls; and that the becceſico * only deſerves to be eaten entire. I uſually eat ſalt-meats, yet I chuſe bread that has no ſalt in it; and my baker never ſends up other to my table, contrary to the cuſtom of the country. In my infancy, what they had moſt to correct in me, was the refuſal of things that children commonly beſt love, as ſugar, ſweet-meats, and marchpanes. My governor oppoſed this my averſion to dainty fare as a kind of nicety, and indeed it is nothing elſe but a difficulty of reliſhing any thing one taſtes. Whoever cures a child of a particular averſion to brown bread, bacon, or garlick, cures him of all kind of delicacy. There are ſome who pretend to work and live hard, that wiſh for powdered beef and bacon amongſt partridge; they have a good time of it; it is the delicacy of delicacies, it is the taſte of an effeminate fortune, that diſreliſhes ordinary things, *Per quæ luxuria divitiarum tædio ludit* †. To ceaſe to make good chear with what another does, and to be curious in what a man eats, is the eſſence of this vice.

He was not dainty in his diet.

Si modica cœnare times olus omne patellâ ‡.

If you ſcorn not a ſallad in a mean diſh.

* A ſmall bird, called a fig-pecker, becauſe it feeds upon figs when they are ripe, eſpecially in Piedmont. It ſings like a Nightingale, and lives nine ten or years. † Seneca, epiſt. 18. ‡ Hor. lib. i. epiſt. 5. ver. 2.

There is indeed this difference, that it is better to oblige a man's appetite in things that are moſt eaſy to be had, but it is always vice to oblige a man's ſelf. I formerly ſaid a kinſman of mine was nice, who, by béing in our gallies, had unlearned the uſe of beds, and to put off his cloaths.

Montaigne was brought up from his cradle in the meaneſt and moſt common manner of living.

If I had any ſons, I would wiſh them my fortune. The good father that God gave me, (who has nothing of me but the acknowledgment of his bounty, though truly it is a very hearty one) ſent me from my cradle to be brought up in a poor village of his, and there continued me all the while I was at nurſe, and longer, bringing me up to the meaneſt, and common way of living: *Magna pars libertatis eſt bene moratus venter* *; "a well governed belly is a great "part of liberty." Never take upon yourſelves, and much leſs give up to your wives, the care of their nurture, leave the forming them to fortune, under popular and natural laws; leave it to cuſtom to train them up to frugality and hardſhips, that they may rather deſcend from them, than aſcend to them. This humour of my father's yet aimed at another end, that is, to make me familiar with thoſe people, and with that rank of men who moſt need our aſſiſtance; believing that I would be more obliged rather to regard them who extended their arms to me, than thoſe who turned their backs upon me. For this reaſon alſo it was, that he provided me ſureties at the font, of the meaneſt fortune, to oblige, and bind me to them.

That mothers ought not to have the education of their children.

What was the advantage of this education.

Neither has his deſign ſucceeded altogether ill; for, whether it be becauſe there is more honour in ſuch a condeſcenſion, or out of natural compaſſion, which has a very great power over me, I have a kind inclination towards the meaner ſort of people. The faction which I condemn in our

* Seneca, epiſt. 123.

civil wars, I shall more sharply condemn when I see them flourish and prosper. It will half reconcile me to them, when I shall see them miserable, and suppress. How much do I admire the generous humour of Chelonis *, daughter and wife to the kings of Sparta! Whilst her husband Cleombrotus, in the commotion of her city, had the advantage over Leonidas, her father, she, like a good daughter, stuck close to her father in all his misery and exile in opposition to the conqueror. But so soon as the chance of war turned, she changed her will with the chance of fortune, and bravely turned to her husband's side, whom she accompainied wheresoever his ruin carried him: having, as it appears, no other choice, than to cleave to that side which stood most in need of her, and where she best manifested her compassion. I am naturally more apt to follow the examble of Flaminius, who was ready to give his assistance to those that had need of him, than to those who had power to do him good; than the example of Pyrrhus, who was of an humour to stoop to the great, and to domineer over the meanest sort of people.

The noble humour of Chelonis.

Long sittings at table make me uneasy, and do me harm; for whether it be for want of more continency, having accustomed myself to it from a child, I eat all the while I sit. Therefore, that at my own house, though the meals there are of the shortest, I chuse to sit down a little while after the rest, as Augustus used to do; but I do not imitate him in rising also before the rest of the company: on the contrary, I love to sit still a long time after, and to hear the guests talk, provided I am none of the talkers; for I tire and hurt myself with speaking upon a full stomach, as much as I find it pleasant and very wholesome to argue, and to strain my voice before meals.

Montaigne did not love to sit long at table.

The ancient Greeks and Romans had more reason than we, in setting apart for

Long meals of the ancients.

* The reader will be pleased to turn to what Plutarch relates of this generous princess in the life of Agis and Cleomenes, chap. 5.

eating, which is a principal action of life, (if not diverted by other extraordinary buſineſs) many hours, and the greateſt part of the night, eating and drinking more deliberately than we do, who perform all our actions in poſt-haſte; and in extending this natural pleaſure to more leiſure and better uſe, intermixing with their meals ſeveral pleaſant and profitable offices of converſation.

The abſtinence of which Montaigne was capable.

They whoſe buſineſs it is to take care of me, may eaſily hinder me from eating any thing they think will do me harm; for in ſuch things I never covet nor miſs any thing I do not ſee. But if it once comes in by ſight, it is in vain to urge me to forbear, ſo that when I deſign to faſt, I muſt be parted from thoſe that eat ſuppers, and muſt have only ſo much given me, as is required for a regular collation; for if I ſit down to table, I forget my reſolution. When I order my cook to alter the manner of dreſſing any diſh of meat, all my family know it means, that my ſtomach is out of order, and that I ſhall not touch it.

Account of his taſte, with its changes and revolutions.

I love to have all meats that will endure it under-dreſſed, and love them kept till they have contracted a *haut goût*. Nothing but hardneſs generally offends me; (of any other quality I am as patient and indifferent as any man I have known) ſo that, contrary to the common humour, even in fiſh, it often happens, that I think them both too freſh and too firm: not for want of teeth, which I ever had good, even to excellence, and that which age but now begins to threaten. I have been uſed to rub them with a napkin every morning, and before and after dinner. God is favourable to thoſe from whom he takes life by degrees; it is the only benefit of old age; the laſt death will be ſo much the leſs viſible and painful; it will kill but a quarter of a man; or but half a one at moſt. I have one tooth lately fallen out without drawing, and without pain: it was the natural term of its duration. both that part of my being, and ſeveral others, are already dead, and others half dead, of thoſe that were moſt active, and in higheſt eſteem during my vigorous years; ſo

ſo that I melt and ſteal away from myſelf. What a folly would it be in my underſtanding to apprehend the height of this fall, already ſo much advanced, as if it were from the utmoſt precipice? I hope I ſhall not. Indeed I receive a principal conſolation in the thoughts of my death, that it will be juſt and natural, and that henceforward I cannot herein either require or hope from deſtiny any favour that is not lawful. Men make themſelves believe that their anceſtors were taller and had longer lives. But they deceive themſelves; and Solon, who was of thoſe old times, nevertheleſs limits the longeſt duration of life to threeſcore and ten years. I, who have ſo much and ſo univerſally adored the ἄριστον μέτρον; "the golden mean of the ancient times"; and who have concluded the middle meaſure to be the moſt perfect, ſhall I claim to live to an exceeding old age? Whatever happens contrary to the courſe of nature, may be troubleſome; but what comes according to her, muſt always be pleaſant. *Omnia, quæ ſecundum naturam fiunt, ſunt habenda in bonis* *; "all things that are done according to nature, are to be accounted good." And ſo Plato likewiſe ſays, that the death which is occaſioned by wounds and diſeaſes is violent; but that which old age leads us to is of all others the moſt eaſy, and in ſome ſort delightful. *Vitam adoleſcentibus vis aufert, ſenibus maturitas* †; "young men are taken away by "force, old men by maturity." Death mixes and confounds itſelf throughout with life; decay anticipates its hour, and even increaſes as we grow up. I have pictures of myſelf taken at twenty-five, and thirty-five years of age; I compare them with that lately drawn, how often is it no more me, how much more is my preſent image unlike the former, and how unlike to that I ſhall go out of the world with? It is too great an abuſe of nature, to harraſs her ſo that ſhe muſt be forced to leave us; and to abandon our conduct, our eyes, teeth, legs, and all the reſt, to the mercy of a foreign and ſolicited aſſiſtance; and to reſign ourſelves into the hands

* Cicero de Senect. cap. 19. † Ibid.

of art, when she is weary of following us. I am not very fond either of sallads, or fruits, except melons. My father hated all sorts of sauces, and I love them all. Eating too much is a clog to me, but for the quality of what I eat, I do not yet certainly know that any sort of meat hurts me; neither have I observed that either full-moon or decrease, spring or autumn, alter me. We have in us motions that are inconstant, and for which we cannot account. For example, I found radishes first agreeable, afterwards nauseous, and now again grateful. In several other things likewise I find my stomach and appetite vary after the same manner. I have changed and changed again from white-wine to claret, from claret to white-wine.

Montaigne was fond of fish, and did not love to mix it with flesh.

I am a great lover of fish, and consequently make my fasts feasts, and my feasts fasts; and believe what some people say, that it is more easy of digestion than flesh. As I make a conscience of eating flesh upon fish-days, so does my taste make a scruple of mixing fish and flesh, the difference betwixt them seeming to me to be too great.

Why he sometimes fasted.

From my youth I have used sometimes to slip my meals, either to sharpen my appetite against the next day, (for as Epicurus fasted and lived on meagre food to accustom his pleasure to make shift without abundance, I on the contrary do it to prepare my pleasure to make better and more chearful use of abundance) or else I fasted to preserve my vigour for the service of some action of body or mind; for both the one and the other are cruelly dulled in me by repletion (and above all things, I hate that foolish coupling of so healthful and sprightly a goddess with that little undigested belching deity, all over bloated by the fume of his liquor) or to cure my sick stomach, and for want of fit company. For I say as the same Epicurus did, that a man is not so much to regard what he eats, as with whom; and I commend Chilo*, for not engaging himself to be at Periander's

* In Plutarch's Banquet of the seven wise Men.

feast,

feaſt, till he firſt was informed who were to be the other gueſts. No diſh is ſo acceptable to me, nor no ſauce ſo alluring, as that which is extracted from ſociety. I think it more wholeſome to eat leſs at a time and often: but I deſire to make the moſt of appetite and hunger. I would take no pleaſure to be ſtinted in the phyſical way to three or four pitiful meals a day. Who will aſſure me, that if I have a good appetite in the morning, I ſhall have the ſame at ſupper? But eſpecially, let us old fellows take the firſt opportunity of eating, and leave hopes and prognoſtics to the makers of almanacks. The utmoſt fruit of my health is pleaſure; let us take hold of the firſt that offers. I avoid conſtancy in theſe laws of faſting. Whoever deſires that one form ſhall ſerve him, let him avoid the continuing of it: we harden ourſelves in it; our faculties are laid aſleep by it; ſix months after, you ſhall find your ſtomach ſo uſed to it, that all your gain will be the loſs of your liberty of doing otherwiſe, but to your prejudice.

Rules which he obſerved with regard to his cloathing.

I never keep my legs and thighs warmer in winter than in ſummer; one ſingle pair of ſilk ſtockings is all: I have ſuffered myſelf to keep my head warmer for the relief of my rheums, and my belly upon the account of my cholic: my diſeaſes were in a few days habituated to it, and diſdained my ordinary proviſions. I roſe from a ſingle cap to a napkin, and from a napkin-cap to a quilted one. The waddings of my doublet ſerve only for ſhew; they ſignify nothing, if I do not add a hare's ſkin or that of a vultur, and wear a cap under my hat. Follow this gradation, and you will go a fine length. I am reſolved to proceed no further, and would leave off thoſe too, if I durſt. If you fall into any new inconvenience, all this is labour loſt; you are accuſtomed to it; ſeek out ſome other way: thus do ſuch ruin themſelves, who ſubmit to be fettered, and ſuperſtitiouſly confined to rules. They are for adding ſomething more, and ſomething more after that, ſo that there is no end of it.

His preference of dinners to suppers; and the measure he observed in his liquor.

As for our occupations and pleasures, it is much more commodious, as the ancients did, to lose a dinner, and defer making good cheer, till the hour of retirement and repose, without breaking into the day; and so was I formerly used to do. For health, I since by experience find on the contrary, that it is better to dine, and that the digestion is better performed waking. I am not very apt to be thirsty, either well or sick, my mouth is indeed apt to be dry, but without thirst; and commonly I never drink but from a desire that is created by eating, and when I have gone a good way in my meal. I drink pretty well for a man of the common sort: in summer, and at a hungry meal, I not only exceed the limits of Augustus, who drank just thrice and no more; but not to offend Democrates's rule, who forbad that men should stop at four times, as an unluckly number, I proceed when need requires to the fifth glass, in all about three half pints. For the little glasses are my favourites; and I love to drink them off at once, which other people avoid as indecent. I mix my wine most commonly with half, sometimes one third part water; and when I am at home, by an ancient custom that my father's physician prescribed both to him, and to himself, they mix that which is designed for me in the pantry two or three hours before it is brought in. It is said, that Cranaus king of Athens was the inventer of this custom of dashing wine with water; whether profitable or no, I have heard disputed. I think it more decent and wholesome for children to drink no wine till after sixteen or eighteen years of age. The most usual and common method of living is the most becoming: all particularity is in my opinion to be avoided, and I would as much hate a German that mixed water with his wine, as I would a Frenchman who drank it pure. Common custom gives the law in those things.

His notion with regard to air.

I fear a foggy air, and fly from smoak, as from the plague, (the first repairs I fell upon in my own house were the chimnies and privies, a com-

a common and insupportable defect in all old buildings) and amongst the hardships of war, reckon the choaking dust, with which we are smothered a whole day together. I have a free and easy respiration, and my colds for the most part go off without offence to the lungs, and without a cough.

He could bear very cold weather better than hot.

The severe heat of summer is more an enemy to me than the cold of winter; for, besides the inconvenience of heat, not so remediable as cold, and besides the force with which the sun-beams dart upon the head, their glaring light offends my eyes, so that I could not now sit at dinner over-against a great fire.

He had a very long sight, but apt to be weakened by the exercise of it.

To dull the whiteness of paper, in those times when I was more used to read, I laid a piece of glass upon my book, and found my eyes much relieved by it. I am to this hour ignorant of the use of spectacles, and can see as far as ever I did, or as any other person. It is true, that in the evening I begin to find a little trouble and weakness in my sight, if I read; an exercise that always strained my eyes, especially by night. Here is one step backwards, and a very sensible one: I shall fall back another, from the second to the third, and so to the fourth, so gently, that I shall be stark blind before I shall be sensible of the age and decay of my sight: so artificially do the fatal sisters untwist the thread of our lives. Yet I doubt that my hearing begins to grow thick, and you will see I shall have half lost it, when I shall lay the fault on the voices of those that speak to me. The soul must be exceedingly intent to be sensible how it ebbs away. My walking is quick and firm, and I know not which of the two, my mind, or my body, I have most to do to keep in the same state. That preacher is very much my friend, that can oblige my attention a whole sermon through. In places of ceremony, where every one's countenance is so starched, where I have seen the ladies keep even their eyes so fixt, I could never order it so, that some part or other of me did not lash out; so that though

though I was ſet, I was never ſettled; as the philoſopher Chryſippus's * chamber-maid ſaid of her maſter, that he was only drunk in his legs, for it was his cuſtom to be always kicking them about in what place ſoever he ſate, and ſhe ſaid it at a time when though the wine made all his companions drunk, he found no alteration in himſelf at all; the ſame may alſo be ſaid of me from my infancy, that I have either folly or quickſilver in my feet, ſo much reſtleſſneſs and unſettledneſs there is in them wherever they are placed.

Chryſippus drunk in his legs.

It is indecent, beſides the hurt it doth to one's health, and even to the pleaſure of eating, to eat ſo greedily as I do: I oft bite my tongue, and ſometimes my fingers for haſte. Diogenes meeting a boy eating after that manner, gave his tutor a box on the ear. There were men at Rome that taught people to chew, as well as to walk, with a good grace. I thereby loſe the opportunity of ſpeaking, which gives ſo ſweet a reliſh to meals, provided the table-talk be pleaſant and ſhort.

He was too greedy in his eating.

There is jealouſy and envy amongſt our pleaſures, they croſs and hinder one another. Alcibiades, a man well verſed in making good cheer, baniſhed even muſic from tables, that it might not diſturb the pleaſure of diſcourſe, for a reaſon he had from Plato, viz. that it is the cuſtom of vulgar men to call fiddlers and finging-men to feaſts, for want of good diſcourſe and pleaſant talk, with which men of underſtanding know how to regale one another. Varro requires this in great entertainments, perſons of graceful preſence, and agreeable converſation, that are neither mute nor rattles; neatneſs and delicacy both of place and proviſions, and fair weather. A good treat is neither ſlightly artificial, nor a little voluptuous; neither the greateſt captains, nor the greateſt philoſophers, have diſdained the uſe and ſcience of eating well. My imagination has delivered three to my memory, which fortune rendered ſovereignly

His judgment concerning the pleaſures of the table.

* Diog. Laert. in the life of Chryſippus, lib. vii.

ſweet

ſweet to me upon divers occaſions, in my moſt flouriſhing age. My preſent ſtate excludes me from more. For every one, according to the good temper of body and mind wherein he then finds himſelf, furniſhes to his own uſe a particular grace and liking; I, who but juſt crawl upon the earth, hate this inhuman wiſdom, that will have us deſpiſe and hate all the culture of body. I look upon it to be as unjuſt to hate natural pleaſures, as to be too fond of them. Xerxes was ſuch a fool that when environed with all human pleaſures, he propoſed a reward to him that could find him out a new one; and he is not leſs ſo, who denies himſelf any of thoſe pleaſures that nature has provided for him. A man ſhould neither purſue nor fly, but receive them. I receive them I confeſs a little too affectionately and kindly, and eaſily ſuffer myſelf to follow my natural inclination. We need not exaggerate their vanity, they themſelves ſhew it, and make us ſufficiently ſenſible of it. Thanks be to our fickly minds that pall our joys, and put us out of taſte with them, as with themſelves, they entertain both themſelves and all they receive, one while better, and another while worſe, according to their inſatiable, vagabond, and variable eſſence.

Sincerum eſt niſi vas, quodcumque infundis, aceſcit ‡.

All pleaſures ſhun with ſorrow in their train,
For tainted veſſels ſour what they contain.

I, who boaſt that I ſo curiouſly and particularly embrace the conveniencies of life, find, when I nicely conſider them, but very little in them more than wind. But what? We are all wind throughout; and moreover, the wind itſelf loves to bluſter and ſhift from corner to corner more diſcreetly than we, and contents itſelf with its proper offices, without deſiring ſtability and ſolidity, qualities that do not belong to it.

‡ Hor. lib. i. ep. 2. ver. 54.

The

In what rank he placed the pleasures of the imagination and those of the body.

The pure pleasures, as well as the pure displeasures of the imagination, say some, are the greatest; as was expressed by the balance of Critolaus *, It is no wonder; it makes them to its own liking, and cuts what it pleases out of the whole cloth; of which I every day see notable examples, and perhaps to be desired. But I, who am of a mixt and heavy constitution, cannot snap so soon at this one simple object, but I negligently suffer myself to be blindly carried away with the present pleasures of the general human law. Intellectually sensible, and sensibly intellectual. The Cyrenaic philosophers will have it, that as corporeal pains, so corporeal pleasures are more powerful, both as double, and more just. There are some, as Aristotle says, who out of a savage kind of stupidity pretend to disgust them: and I know others, who out of ambition do the same. Why do they not likewise forswear breathing? Why do they not live of their own, and refuse light because it shines gratis, and cost them neither pains nor invention? Let Mars, Pallas, or Mercury, afford them their light by which to see, instead of Venus, Ceres, and Bacchus. Will they not seek the quadrature of the circle, even in their conjugal embraces? I hate that we should be enjoined to have our minds in the clouds when our bodies are at table; I would not have the mind rivetted there, nor that it should be roving, but I am willing it should apply itself to that place, that it should sit, but not lie down there. Aristippus pleaded only for the body, as if we had no soul; Zeno stickled only for the soul, as if we had no body. Both of them were in the wrong. Pythagoras, say they, adhered to a philosophy that was all contemplation; Socrates to one that was all manners and action. Plato found out a medium betwixt both; but they only say so for talk sake; for the true mean is found in Socrates;

* In my opinion Montaigne here applies this balance to a purpose very different from that which Critolaus applied it to, if we may judge of this balance by what Cicero says of it. Tusc. Quæst. lib. v. cap. 27.

and

and Plato is more Socratic than Pythagorean, and it becomes him better. When I dance, I dance; when I ſleep, I ſleep. Nay, when I walk alone in a beautiful orchard, if my thoughts are ſome part of the time taken up with foreign occurrences, I call them back again to my walk, or to the orchard, to the ſweetneſs of the ſolitude, and to myſelf.

Nature has rendered thoſe actions agreeable which man is under a neceſſity of performing.

Nature has with a motherly tenderneſs obſerved this, that the actions ſhe has enjoined us for our neceſſity ſhould be alſo pleaſant to us, and invites us to them, not only by reaſon, but alſo by appetite: and it is injuſtice to pervert her laws. When I ſee both Cæſar and Alexander in the moſt weighty concerns of their great buſineſs, ſo fully enjoy human and corporeal pleaſures, I do not ſay that they unbent their minds, but ſtrained them higher; ſubjecting thoſe violent employments and laborious thoughts by the ſtrength of courage, to the cuſtom of common life. Wiſe, had they believed that the former was their ordinary, the latter, their extraordinary vocation. We are great fools. He has paſt over his life in indolence, ſay we: I have done nothing to-day. What! have you not lived? It is not only the fundamental, but the moſt illuſtrious of your occupations. Had I been put to the management of great affairs, I would have made it ſeen what I could do. Have you known how to meditate, and manage your life? You have performed the greateſt work of all. For a man to ſhew, and ſet himſelf off, nature has no need of fortune; ſhe equally ſhews herſelf in all degrees, and behind a curtain, as well as without one. Have you known how to compoſe your manners? You have done a great deal more than he who has compoſed books. Have you known how to take repoſe? You have done more than he who has taken cities and empires.

What is man's true maſterpiece.

The glorious maſter-piece of man is to know how to live to purpoſe: all other things, viz. to reign, to lay up treaſure,

and

and to build, are at the moſt but little appendices, and ſmall props. I take a delight to ſee a general of an army at the foot of a breach he intends preſently to aſſault, give himſelf up entire and free at dinner, to talk and be merry with his friends; and to ſee Brutus, when heaven and earth conſpired againſt him and the Roman liberty, ſtealing ſome hour of the night from his rounds to read and abridge Polybius, void of all fear. It is for little ſouls, that are cruſhed under the weight of affairs, not to know how cleverly to diſengage themſelves, and not to know how to lay them aſide, and take them up again.

Of fortes, pejoraque paſſi,
Mecum ſæpe viri, nunc vino pellite curas.
Cras ingens iterabimus æquor *.

Brave ſpirits, who with me have felt worſe ſorrow,
Drink cares away, we'll ſail again to-morrow.

Whether it be in jeſt or earneſt, that the theological and Sorbonnical wine, and their feaſts, are turned into a proverb, I think it but reaſon, they ſhould dine ſo much more commodiouſly and pleaſantly as they have profitably and ſeriouſly employed the morning in the excerciſe of their ſchools. The conſcience of having well ſpent the other hours is the juſt and ſavoury ſauce of tables. The ſages lived ſo, and that inimitable emulation for virtue, which aſtoniſhes us both in the one and the other Cato, that humour of theirs, ſevere even to importunity, is thus gently ſubmitted, and made pliant to the laws of the human condition, both of Venus and Bacchus; and according to the precepts of their ſect, that require the perfect wiſe man ſhould be as expert and intelligent in

* Hor. lib. i. ode 7. ver. 30.

the

the uſe of pleaſures, as in all other duties of life. *Cui cor ſapiat, ei et ſapiat palatus* *.

Relaxation and affability, methinks, wonderfully honour, and beſt become a great and generous ſoul. Epaminondas did not think, that to dance, ſing, and be intent upon play with the boys of his city, derogated from the honour of his glorious victories, and the perfect reformation of manners that was in him. And amongſt ſo many admirable actions of Scipio, the grandfather, a perſon worthy the opinion of a heavenly extraction, there is nothing that gives him a greater grace than to ſee him indolently and childiſhly trifling, in gathering and chuſing ſhells, and playing at quoits upon the ſeaſhore with Lælius: and, if it was foul weather, amuſing and pleaſing himſelf in writing comedies, repreſenting the meaneſt and moſt popular actions of mankind: and while his head was full of that wonderful enterprize of Hannibal and Africa, viſiting the ſchools in Sicily, and being preſent at the philoſophical lectures, even ſo as to attract the blind envy of his enemies at Rome. Nor is there any thing more remarkable in Socrates, than that, old as he was, he found time to learn dancing, and playing upon inſtruments, and thought it well ſpent; nevertheleſs, this very man was ſeen in extaſy ſtanding upon his feet a whole day and a night together in the preſence of all the Grecian army, ſurpriſed and tranſported with ſome profound thought. He was the firſt, who among ſo many valiant men of the army, ran to the relief of Alcibiades, overpowered by the enemy, ſcreened him with his own body, and diſengaged him from the crowd by abſolute force of arms. It was he who, in the Delian battle relieved and ſaved Xenophon, when diſmount-

Relaxation and affability ſpecially becoming great and generous ſouls.

* Cicero de Finibus, Bon. et Mal. lib. ii. cap. 9.

ed from his horſe; and who, amongſt all the people of Athens, enraged as he was at ſo unworthy a ſpectacle, firſt preſented himſelf to reſcue Theramenes, whom the thirty tyrants were dragging to execution by their guards; and deſiſted not from his bold enterprize, but at the remonſtrance of Theramenes himſelf, though he was only followed by two more in all. He has been ſeen, when courted by a beauty, with whom he was deeply in love, yet maintain a ſevere abſtinence in time of need. He has been ſeen continually to go to the war, and with his bare feet to travel upon the ice; to wear the ſame garb winter and ſummer; to ſurpaſs all his companions in bearing hardſhips; and to eat no more at a feaſt, than at his own private dinner. He was known 27 years together to endure hunger, poverty, the untractableneſs of his children, and the ſcratches of his wife, with the ſame countenance; and in the end calumny, tyranny, impriſonment, fetters, and poiſon. But was that man invited to drink bumpers by any rule of civility? He was alſo the man of the army to whom the advantage of it remained. And he never refuſed to play at cob-nut, nor to ride the hobby-horſe with the boys, and it became him well; for all actions, ſays philoſophy, equally become, and equally honour a wiſe man. We have enough wherewith to do it, and we ought never to be weary of repreſenting the image of this great man in all the patterns and forms of perfection. There are very few examples of life full and pure, and we wrong our inſtruction to propoſe to ourſelves every day, ſuch as are weak and imperfect, ſcarce good for any one ſervice, and ſuch as draw us rather back, and that are rather corrupters than correctors of manners. The people deceive themſelves; a man goes much more eaſily indeed by the ends, where the extremity ſerves for a bound, a ſtop, and a guide, than by the middle way, which is large and open, and more according to art than nature; but much leſs nobly and commendably.

Magnani-

What discovers the greatness of a soul.

Magnanimity consists not so much in mounting and in proceeding forward, as in knowing how to govern and circumscribe itself. It takes every thing for great, that is enough; and demonstrates itself better in moderate, than eminent things. There is nothing so handsome and lawful, as well and duly to act the part of the man; nor any science so difficult, as to know how to live; and of all our infirmities, it is the most savage, to despise our being.

It ought not to shun natural pleasures, but to taste them with moderation.

Whoever has a mind to send his soul abroad, when the body is ill at ease, to preserve it from the contagion, let him do it if he can: but otherwise on the contrary, let the souls favour and assist the body, and not refuse to participate of its natural pleasures, and with a conjugal complacency; using whoever, if it be a wise soul, moderation, lest by indiscretion they should be confounded with vexation. Intemperance is the best of pleasure, and temperance is not its scourge, but rather its seasoning. Eudoxus *, who therein established the sovereign good, and his companions, who set so high a value upon it, tasted it in its most charming sweetness by the means of temperance, which in them was singular and exemplary †.

How we ought to behave with regard both to pain and pleasure.

I enjoin my soul to look upon pain and pleasure with an eye equally regulated and stedfast; *Eodem enim vitio est effusio animi in lætitia, quo in dolore contractio* ‡; "the "overflowing of the heart in mirth, is as "bad as the contracting of it in sorrow;" but on the one gaily, and on the other gravely, and as far as it is able,

* As Diog. Leart. affirms in the life of Eudoxus (lib. viii. § 88) on the report of Nicomachus, the son of Aristotle.

† Aristotle positively says that Eudoxus was distinguished by his extraordinary temperance. Moral. ad Nicomachum, lib. x. cap. 2.

‡ Cicero Tusc. lib. iv. cap. 31.

to be as careful to extinguish the one, as to extend the other. The judging rightly of good, brings along with it the judging soundly of evil. Pain has something not to be avoided in its tender beginning, and pleasure has something that may be avoided in its excessive end. Plato couples them together ‡, and will have it that it should be equally the office of fortitude to fight against pain, and against the immoderate and charming blandishments of pleasure. They are two fountains, from which whoever draws, when and as much as he needs, whether city, man, or beast, is very happy. The first is to be taken physically, and upon necessity more sparingly; the other for thirst, but not to drunkenness. Pain, pleasure, love, and hatred, are the first things that a child is sensible of; if when his reason comes they are applied to it, that is virtue.

The use Montaigne made of life.

I have a dictionary to my myself, I squander away my time when it is ill and uneasy; but when it is good, I will not squander it away. I run it over again, and stick to it; a man must run over the ill, and settle upon the good. This ordinary phrase of pastime, and passing away the time, represents the custom of those wise people, who think they cannot fare better than to let life run on and slide away, to pass it over, to kill it, and as much as they can, to take no notice of it, and to steal from it, as a thing of a troublesome and contemptible quality. But I know it to be another kind of thing, and find it both valuable and commodious, even in its latest decay, wherein I now enjoy it: and nature has delivered it into our hands in such and so favourable circumstances, that we need only thank ourselves if it be troublesome to us, or slide unprofitable away. *Stulti vita ingrata est, trepida est, tota in futurum fertur* †; "the life of a fool is uneasy, timorous, and wholly bent upon futurity." Ne-

‡ In his Dialogue of the Laws, lib. i. p. 636.
† Seneca, epist. 15.

ver-

vertheleſs, I compoſe myſelf to loſe mine without regret, but yet as a thing that is periſhable by its condition, not that it is troubleſome or uneaſy to me. Neither does it properly well become any, to welcome death, excepting ſuch as are fond of life. There is good huſbandry in enjoying it. I enjoy it double to what others do; for the meaſure of the fruition depends more or leſs upon our application of it. Now, eſpecially, that I perceive mine to be ſo ſhort in time, I am inclined to extend it in weight: I will ſtop the quickneſs of its flight *, by the ſuddenneſs of my graſping it: and by the vigour of uſing it, make myſelf amends for the haſte in which it runs away. By how much the poſſeſſion of life is more ſhort, I muſt take the deeper and the fuller hold of it. Others are ſenſible of the ſweetneſs of contentment, and of proſperity; I feel it too, as well as they, but not as it ſlides and paſſes by; for a man ought to ſtudy, taſte, and ruminate upon it, to render due thanks for it to him that grants it to us. They enjoy the other pleaſures as they do that of ſleep, the without knowing them; and to end, that even ſleep itſelf ſhould not ſo ſtupidly paſs me unnoticed, I have formerly cauſed myſelf to be diſturbed in it, to the end that I might take a view of it. I ponder with myſelf upon contentment; I do not ſkim over it, but ſound it, and bend my reaſon, now grown perverſe and diſguſted, to recover it. Do I find myſelf in any calm ſituation? Is there any pleaſure that tickles me? I do not ſuffer it to cheat my

* This perhaps furniſhed the hint for the following merry French catch, viz.

Plus inconſtant que l'Onde et la Nuage,
Le Temps s'enfuit: pourquoi le regretter?
Malgré la pente volage
Que l'oblige à nous quitter,
En faire l'uſage c'eſt l'arrêter;
Goutons mille douceurs:
Et ſi la vie eſt un paſſage,
Sur ce paſſage au moins ſemons des fleurs.

ſenſes. I aſſociate my ſoul to it, not to be abſorbed in it, but to take delight in it; not to loſe itſelf, but to find itſelf in it; and I employ it on its part to view itſelf in this proſperous eſtate, to weigh, eſteem, and amplify its happineſs. It computes how much it ſtands indebted to almighty God that its conſcience, and other inteſtine paſſions are at reſt, that the body is in its natural diſpoſition, orderly and competently enjoying the delicate and flattering functions, by which he is graciouſly pleaſed to recompenſe the ſufferings wherewith his juſtice in its turn ſcourges us. How great a benefit is it to man to have his ſoul ſo ſeated, that which way ſoever ſhe turns her eye, the heaven is calm about her? No deſire, no fear or doubt, that troubles its aſpect, nor any difficulty paſt, preſent, or to come, which his imagination may not paſs over, without offence. This conſideration derives great luſtre from the compariſon of different conditions; and therefore it is, that I propoſe to myſelf in a thouſand faces, thoſe whom fortune, or their own error, torments and carries away; and moreover thoſe, who more like to me, ſo negligently and careleſly receive their good fortune. They are men who paſs away their time indeed, they run over the preſent, and that which they poſſeſs, to give themſelves up to hope, and to the ſhadows and vain images, which fancy places before them,

Morte obitâ quales fama eſt volitare figuras,
Aut quæ ſopitos deludunt ſomnia ſenſus *.

Such forms they ſay as dead men's ſpirits have,
Or which in dreams our drowſy ſenſe deceive.

and which haſten and prolong their flight, according as they are purſued. The fruit and aim of their purſuit is

* Æneid. lib. x. ver. 641.

to

to purſue; as Alexander ſaid, that the end of his labour, was to labour.

Nil actum credens cum quid ſupereſſet agendum †.

Thinking nought done, if ought was left to do.

For my part therefore I love life, and cultivate it, ſuch as it has pleaſed God to beſtow upon us; I do not offer to wiſh it had no neceſſity of eating and drinking; and I would think my offence as inexcuſable, to wiſh it had been double to what it is. *Sapiens divitiarum naturalium quæſitor acerrimus* ‡; "a wiſe man hunts ſharply after "natural riches." Nor that we ſhould ſupport ourſelves by putting only a little of that drug into our mouths by which Epimenides took away his appetite, and kept himſelf alive; nor that a man ſhould ſtupidly produce children, with his fingers or heels, but rather with reverence I ſpeak it, that he might voluptuouſly produce them with his fingers and heels; nor that the body ſhould be without deſire, and void of delight. Theſe are ungrateful and wicked complaints. I accept kindly and gratefully, what nature has done for me; am well pleaſed with it, and proud of it. A man does wrong to the great and almighty Giver of all things, to refuſe, diſannul, or diſfigure his gift; he has made every thing well. *Omnia quæ ſecundum naturam ſunt eſtimatione digna ſunt* §; "all things that are according to "nature are worthy of eſteem."

His diſcourſes like his deportment.

Of philoſophical opinions, I more willingly embrace thoſe that are moſt ſolid, that is to ſay, the moſt humane,

† Lucan. lib. ii. ver. 657. The poet ſpeaks here of Cæſar, who was altogether as active and indefatigable as Alexander.

‡ Seneca, epiſt. 119. § Cicero de Finib. lib. iii. c. 6. We find the ſenſe here to be the ſame, though not the very words as quoted by Montaigne.

and moſt our own: my diſcourſes, are ſuitable to my manners, low and humble: philoſophy brings forth a child to my liking, when it puts itſelf upon its *ergo*'s, to prove that it is a ſavage alliance to match divine with earthly, rational with irrational, ſevere with indulgent, and the honeſt with diſhoneſt; that pleaſure is a brutiſh quality, unworthy to be taſted by a wiſe man; that the ſole pleaſure which he extracts from the enjoyment of a fair young wife, is the pleaſure of his conſcience to perform an action according to order: as to put on his boots for a profitable journey. Oh, that his followers had no more right, nor nerves, nor juice, in getting their wives maidenheads, than there is in his lectures.

Corporeal pleaſure has its value, though it is inferior to that of the mind.

This is not what Socrates ſays, who is both his maſter and ours. He values, as he ought, bodily pleaſure, but he prefers that of the mind, as having more force, conſtancy, facility, variety, and dignity. This according to him goes by no means alone, he is not ſo fantaſtic, but only it goes firſt. Temperance in him is the moderatrix, not the adverſary of pleaſures. Nature is a gentle guide, but not more gentle, than prudent and juſt. *Intrandum eſt in rerum naturam, et penitùs quid ea poſtulet, pervidendum* †; "a "man muſt ſearch into the nature of things, and ex- "amine throughly what ſhe requires." I every where ſearch for the print of her foot, but we have confounded it with artificial traces. That ſovereign Academic and Peripatetic good, which is to live according to nature, becomes by this means hard to limit and explain: and that of the Stoics, bordering upon it, which is to conſent to nature. Is it not an error to eſteem any action leſs worthy, becauſe they are neceſſary? Yet they ſhall not beat it out of my head, that it is not a ſuitable marriage of pleaſure with neceſſity, to which

† Cicero de Fin. lib. v. cap. 16.

ſays

ſays an ancient, the gods always conſent. To what end do we diſmember by divorce, a fabric connected by ſo mutual and fraternal a correſpondence: let us, on the contrary renew it by mutual offices, let the mind rouze and quicken the dulneſs of the body, and the body ſtop and fix the levity of the ſoul. *Qui velut ſummum bonum, laudat animæ naturam, et tanquam malum, naturam carnis accuſat, profecto et animam carnaliter appetit, et carnem carnaliter fugit, quoniam id vanitate ſentit humanâ, non veritate divinâ**; "he who "commends the nature of the ſoul as the ſupreme "good, and accuſes the nature of the fleſh as evil, "does certainly both carnally affect the ſoul, and carnally flies the fleſh, becauſe he is poſſeſſed by ſuch "belief through human vanity, and not by divine "truth." In this preſent that God has made us, there is nothing unworthy our care; we are ſtrictly accountable for it. And it is no ſlight commiſſion to man, to conduct man according to his condition. It is expreſs, ſimple, and the principal of all; and the Creator has ſeriouſly and ſeverely enjoined it. Authority has alone the power to work upon common underſtandings, and is of more weight in a foreign language, and therefore let us again charge with it in this place. *Stultitiæ proprium quis non dixerit, ignavè, et contumaciter facere quæ facienda ſunt; et aliò corpus impellere, aliò animum, diſtrahique inter diverſiſſimos motus †?* "who "will not ſay, that it is the property of folly, ſlothfully "and contumaciouſly to perform what is to be done, "and to bend the body one way, and the mind another, ſo as to be diſtracted betwixt the moſt different motions?" Which to make apparent, let any one ſome day tell you what whimſies and imaginations he puts into his own pate, and upon the account of which he diverted his thoughts from a good meal,

* Aug. de Civitate Dei, lib. xiv. cap. 5. where he has a view properly to the Manichees, who held the fleſh and the body to be the production of the evil principle. † Senec. epiſt. 74.

and

and complained of the time he ſpends in eating: you will find there is nothiug ſo inſipid in all the diſhes at your table, as this fine talk of his, (for generally we had better ſleep than wake to the purpoſe we do:) and that his diſcourſes and notions are not ſo good as your fricaſſee. Though they were the raptures of Archimedes himſelf, what were they worth? I do not here ſpeak of, nor mix with the rabble of us ordinary men, and the vanity of the thoughts and deſires that divert us, thoſe venerable ſouls, elevated by the ardour of devotion and religion, to a conſtant, and conſcientious meditation of divine things, who, by a lively endeavour, and vehement hope, having a foretaſte of the eternal nouriſhment, the final aim, and the laſt ſtop of Chriſtian deſires, the ſole, conſtant, and incorruptible pleaſure, diſdain all regard to our beggarly, frothy, and ambiguous conveniencies, and eaſily reſign to the body the care and uſe of ſenſual and temporal food. It is a privileged ſtudy. I have ever amongſt us obſerved ſupercelestial opinions, and ſubterranean manners to be of ſingular accord.

The folly of that man who aſpires to be above what he is.

Æſop, that great man, ſaw his maſter piſs as he walked: "what," ſaid he, "muſt we dung too as we run?" Let us manage our time as well as we can, there will yet remain a great deal that will be idle, and ill employed. The mind has not other hours enough by its choice, wherein to do its buſineſs, without diſaſſociating itſelf from the body, in that little ſpace it requires for its neceſſity. They aim to put themſelves out of themſelves, and to eſcape from being men. What folly in this! Inſtead of transforming themſelves into angels, they transform themſelves into beaſts, and inſtead of elevating themſelves they ſink. Theſe tranſcendent humours affright me, like places that are high and inacceſſible: and nothing is hard for me to digeſt in the life of Socrates but his ecſtaſies and communication with dæmons. Nothing is ſo human in Plato as that for which they

they say he was called divine. And of our sciences, those seem to be the most terrestrial and low that are highest mounted. I find nothing so humble and mortal in the life of Alexander as his fancies about his immortalization. Philotas pleasantly jeered him in his answer. He congratulated him by letter upon the oracle of Jupiter Ammon's having placed him amongst the Gods; "for thy "sake I am glad of it," said he, "but the men are to be "pitied," who are to live with a man, and to obey him, who exceeds, and is not contented with the measure of a man. *Diis te minorem quod geris, imperas* *; "because thou carriest thyself lower than the gods, thou "dost command men." The pretty inscription wherewith the Athenians honoured the entry of Pompey into their city is conformable to my sense.

D'autant es tu dieu, comme
Tu te recognois homme †.

So much thou hast of deity
As thou dost own of man in thee.

It is absolute, and as it were, a divine perfection, for a man to know how to enjoy his being, as he ought. We seek other conditions, by reason we do not understand the use of our own; and go out of ourselves, for want of knowing what we do. It is to much purpose to go upon stilts, for when upon stilts, we must yet walk with our legs: and when seated upon the most elevated throne in the world, we are but seated upon our breech. The fairest lives, in my opinion, are those which regularly accommodate themselves to the common and human model: yet without miracle, and without extravagance. but old age stands a little in need of more tender treatment. Let us recommend it to God, the protector of health and wisdom, but yet let it be gay and sociable:

* Hor. lib. iii. ode 6. ver. 5.

† In the life of Pompey, by Plutarch, chap. 7.

Frui

Frui paratis et valido mihi
Latoe dones, et precor integrâ
Cum mente, nec turpem senectam
Degere, nec cythara carentem †.

Grant this Apollo, and I ask no more,
A mind to use my present store
With health and life, but not so long
As brings contempt, and cramps my song.

† Horace, lib. i. ode 31. ver. 17, &c.

The End of the Third and last Book of
MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYS.

THE

APPENDIX:

Containing Six Letters from MONTAIGNE, which never appeared before in any Edition of his ESSAYS, nor any where elſe, except in a ſmall Collection, now extremely ſcarce, which MONTAIGNE publiſhed with the Royal Privilege at Paris, A. D. 1571.

LETTER I.

An Introduction of BOETIA'S *Tranſlation of* XENOPHON'S *Tract, intituled* OECONOMY; *To monſieur* DE LANSAC, *Knight of the King's Order, a Member of his Privy Council, Superintendant of his Finances, and Captain of the Hundred Gentlemen of his Houſhold.*

SIR,

I Send you Xenophon's oeconomy tranſlated into French by the late Monſieur de la Boetia, a preſent which I thought very proper for you, not only for its coming in the firſt place, as you know, from the hand of a perſon of diſtinction, a very great man both in war and peace; but for having taken its ſecond form from that perſon, whom I am certain you both loved and eſteemed as long as he lived. This treatiſe will be a conſtant inducement to the continuance of your favourable opinion and good-will to his name and memory. And I will be bold to ſay that you need not fear the making any addition to your regard for him ſince as you took a liking to him only from the public teſtimonies of his character, it is incumbent on me to aſſure you that he had ſo many degrees of ability beyond common fame, that you are very far from knowing him thoroughly. He did me the honour, which I rank with the greateſt bleſſings of my fortune, to form ſo ſtrict and cloſe a connection of friendſhip with me, that unleſs my ſight at any time failed me, there was not a biaſs,

a biaſs, motive, or ſpring in his ſoul, which I could not diſcern and judge of. But without offence to the truth, he was, take him altogether, ſo wonderful a man, that leſt my word ſhould not be taken for any thing, if I once tranſgreſs the bounds of probability, I am forced in ſpeaking of him to conſtrain and contract myſelf ſhort of the extent of what I know of him. And for this time, ſir, I ſhall barely content myſelf with intreating you, for the honour and veneration which you owe to the truth, to believe and teſtify that our Guyenne never ſaw his fellow amongſt the gentlemen of his robe. In hopes therefore, that you render him that which is moſt juſtly due to him, and with a view to keep him freſh in your memory, I preſent you this book, which at the ſame time will ſatisfy you on my part, that had not my inſufficiency laid me under an expreſs prohibition to do it, I would have been as ready to preſent you with ſomething of my own, as an acknowledgement of the obligations which I am under to you, and of that favour and friendſhip which you have for a long time ſhewn to our family. But, ſir, for want of better coin I offer you in payment the ſincereſt tender of my humble ſervice.

Sir, I beg God to protect you, and am

Your obedient ſervant,

MICHAEL DE MONTAIGNE.

LETTER II.

An Introduction of BOETIA'S *Tranſlation of* PLUTARCH'S *Rules of Marriage. A Monſieur Monſieur* DE MESMES, *Lord* DE ROISSY *et* DE MAL-ASSIZE, *a member of the King's Privy Council.*

SIR

IT is one of the moſt remarkable follies which men are guilty of, to exert the whole force of their underſtanding to give a ſhock and an overthrow to opinions, that are commonly received, and ſuch too as yield us ſatisfaction and content. For whereas every thing under heaven employs the means and inſtruments with which nature has

has furnished it, for the ornament and convenicency of its being, these men, that they may seem to be of a more gay and sprightly disposition, not capable of admitting and entertaining any thing but what has been a thousand times touched and poised in the nicest balance of reason, shake their minds out of a calm and easy situation for the sake of possessing them, after a long enquiry, with doubt, uneasiness, and fluctuation. It is not without reason that childhood and simplicity have been so much recommended by truth itself. For my part, I had rather be more at my ease, with less ability; more contented, with less understanding. Therefore, sir, though the men of most refined parts laugh at our concern for what may pass in the world after we are departed from it, as if the soul when lodged elsewhere had no longer any feeling for things below, yet I think it is a great comfort with respect to the frailty and short space of this life, to think that it is capable of being strengthened and prolonged by fame and reputation; and I most heartily give into so pleasant and favourable an opinion, which is innate in us, without a curious enquiry into the how or the wherefore. From hence it is, that as I loved no mortal so well as M. de la Boetia, the greatest man of this age in my opinion, I would think it a gross failure of my duty if I wittingly suffered a character so fragrant and so worthy of recommendation as his to vanish and slip out of my remembrance, and if I did not upon that score attempt to revive and raise him again to life. I believe that he is sensible of it in some measure, and that these efforts of mine affect and please him. In truth, he still lodges in my breast so entire and so lively that I cannot think him so deeply under ground, nor so totally removed from our correspondence. Now, sir, because every fresh discovery which I make of his person and character is as multiplication of this second life of his, and because his name is ennobled and honoured from the place that receives it, it is incumbent on me not only to cause it to be propagated to the utmost of my power, but also to recommend it to the care of persons of honour and virtue, in the number whereof you have so high a station, that in order

order to afford you an opportunity of receiving this new gueſt, and giving him a good welcome, I choſe to preſent you with this ſmall work, not for any ſervice that you may reap from it, being very ſure that you have no need of an interpreter, to converſe with Plutarch and his companions; but it is poſſible that madame de Roiſſy, when ſhe ſees the decorum in her houſhold, and your good harmony repreſented to the life, will be well pleaſed to find her natural diſpoſition, not only to have attained to, but even to have ſurmounted what the wiſeſt philoſophers have been able to conceive of the duty and laws of marriage. And in all caſes, I ſhall ever eſteem it an honour if it lies in my power, to do any thing that may give you or yours a pleaſure; ſuch is my obligation to ſerve you,

Sir, I pray God to give you a life long and happy, being

Your humble ſervant,

Montaigne,
April 30, 1570.

MICHAEL DE MONTAIGNE.

LETTER III.

Printed before BOETIA'S *Tranſlation of* PLUTARCH'S *Letter of Conſolation to his Wife, and inſcribed by* MONTAIGNE,

To Madamoiſelle DE MONTAIGNE, my Wife.

YOU know, wife, very well, that according to the faſhion of the fine gentlemen now a-days, you are not to expect to be ſtill courted and careſſed. For they ſay, that a man of parts may indeed take a woman, but that he is a fool if he marry her. Let them ſay as they liſt; for my own part, I keep to the plain faſhion of old age, of which I now and then wear the beard. And in truth novelty is ſo expenſive even now to this poor ſtate (and yet I know not whether it may not ſtill riſe higher) that in all caſes and places I waſh my hands of it. Let you and I, wife, live after the old

French

French way. You may remember how that dear brother and inſeperable companion of mine, M. de la Boetia, did on his death-bed give me his papers and books, which were afterwards my moſt favourite furniture. I neither deſire nor deſerve that they ſhould be applied ſolely to my own uſe. For this reaſon I have reſolved to give ſome of them to my friends. And, becauſe I think I have none more intimate than yourſelf, I ſend you his French tranſlation of Plutarch's Letter of Conſolation to his Wife, being very ſorry, that fortune has rendered this ſo ſuitable a preſent for you, and that though you have had no child but one daughter, after long expectation, when we had been married four years, you were forced to part with her in the ſecond year of her age. But I leave it to Plutarch to conſole you, and to admoniſh you of your duty in this caſe, deſiring that you would for my ſake give him credit: for he will diſcover my intentions to you, and what may be urged upon this head, much better than I can. To conclude, wife, I earneſtly recommend myſelf to your favour, and pray God to preſerve you. I am

Paris, Sept. 10, 1570.

Your good huſband,

MICHAEL DE MONTAIGNE.

LETTER IV.

Printed before ſome Latin verſes of STEPHEN DE LA BOETIA,

To Monſeigneur, Monſieur de l'Hoſpital, chancellor of France.

MONSEIGNEUR,

I HAVE a notion that ſuch gentlemen as you, to whom fortune and the reaſon of things have committed the adminiſtration of the public affairs, are not more curious in any enquiry, than how you may attain

to the knowledge of the men in your offices; for there is scarce any community so barren, but it has men enough in it for the commodious discharge of all its functions, provided its department and jurisdiction can be justly laid out. And when that point is once gained, there would be nothing remaining to hinder the perfect composition of a state. Now the more desirable this is, the more difficult it is, forasmuch as neither your eyes can see so far, as to try and chuse in so great and so diffuse a multitude, nor can they penetrate to the bottom of men's hearts, to discover their intentions and their consciences, the chief articles to be considered; so that there was never yet any establishment ever so good, in which we have not often observed the mistake of such allotment and election. And in those, where ignorance and malice, dissimulation, bribery, intrigues, and violence carry the point, if any election is made meritoriously, it is undoubtedly to be ascribed to fortune, which by the inconstancy of its various turns happened this one time to fall into the train of reason. This consideration, Sir, has often been my comfort, knowing M. Stephen de la Boetia, one of the most proper and necessary men for the chief offices in France, to have lived all his days unemployed and neglected by his own fire-side, to the great damage of the commonweal; for as to his own part I must tell you, sir, that he so abounded in those possessions and treasures which defy fortune, that never was any man more satisfied or more contented. I know indeed that he was advanced to those dignities of his neighbourhood, which are reckoned great; and I know moreover that never was any man better qualified for them, and that at thirty-two years of age, when he died, he had acquired greater reputation in that class than any of his predecessors. But surely it is unreasonable to let a man who would make a good officer, remain a common soldier, and to employ those in mean offices who would act well in the chief. The truth is, that his abilities were not employed to the best advantage, nor sufficiently exerted; so that over and above his office, he had a surplus of great

great talents that were idle and unprofitable, which might have been of service to the public affairs, and an honour to himself. But, sir, since he was so backward to push himself into the grande monde, it not being the lot of virtue and ambition to lodge in one breast; and as he lived in times so stupid or so full of envy, that he could not possibly have any assistance from another's testimony of him, I long prodigiously, that at least his memory, which alone must now and ever lay claim to the offices of our friendship, may receive the reward of his merit, and that it may have a place in the recommendation of persons of honour and virtue. For this reason, sir, I was desirous of bringing him to light, and presenting him to you by these few Latin verses that he has left behind him. Quite contrary to the mason who exhibits the gayest part of his edifice towards the street, and to the mercer who makes a shew and parade of the richest sample of his goods, the things most to be prized in my friend, the very juice and marrow of his merit, went away with him, and we have nothing left of him but the bark and the leaves. The man who is capable of displaying the well regulated sallies of his imagination, his piety, his virtue, his justice, the vivacity of his temper, the weight and solidity of his judgment, the sublimity of his conceptions, so far exalted above those of the vulgar, his learning, the gracefullness that usually accompanied all his actions, the tender love which he had for his wretched country, and his mortal and avowed aversion to every vice, but especially to that base traffick which is screened under the honourable name of justice, would certainly kindle a singular affection for him in the breast of all good men, mixed with a wonderful regret for the loss of him. But, sir, this is so far out of my power, that he never had a thought of leaving any evidence to posterity of the fruit of his studies, and nothing remains thereof but what he wrote now and then to pass away the time. Be this as it will, I intreat you, sir, to receive him with a good countenance; and as we often judge of the greater by the less, and as the very pastimes of great men give an

honourable idea to the clear sighted, of the source from which they spring, I hope you will by this work of his rise to the knowledge of himself, and by consequence love and embrace his name and memory. In so doing, sir, you will but render an equivalent to the very settled opinion which he had of your virtue, and also accomplish what he exceedingly longed for whilst he lived. For there was not a man in the world, in whose acquaintance and friendship he thought himself more happy than in yours. But if any one takes it ill that I make so bold with other people's concerns, I must tell him, that never was any thing more exactly written or delivered in the schools of the philosophers, concerning the prerogatives and duties of sacred friendship than what was the practice betwixt this personage and me. For the rest, sir, this trivial present, like killing two birds with one stone, will serve, if you please, to shew you the honour and veneration in which I hold your abilities, and singular inherent qualities; for as to such as are external and fortuitous, it is not my fancy to bring them into the accompt.

Sir, I pray God to grant you very happy long life.

Montaigne.
April 30, 1570.

Your obedient humble servant,
MICHAEL DE MONTAIGNE.

LETTER V.

Or rather an extract of a letter, which Monsieur the counsellor DE MONTAIGNE, *wrote to his father Monseigneur* DE MONTAIGNE, *containing some particulars which he observed, of the sickness and death of the late M.* DE LA BOETIA.

AS to his last words, if a good account of them is to be expected from any hand, it is undoubtedly from mine; not only because all the time of his sickness, he was not so fond of conversing with any-body as with me, but also because, such was the singular and brotherly

love

love we bore to one another, that I had a moſt certain knowledge of his deſigns, opinions, and temper, all his life-time, as much no doubt as it was poſſible for any one man to know of another, and becauſe I knew them to be ſublime, virtuous, determinate, and withal wonderful: I foreſaw, that if his diſtemper would give him ſtrength to expreſs himſelf, nothing would come from his lips but what was great, and very worthy of imitation; therefore I gave the utmoſt attention to it. It is true, monſeigneur, that as my memory is very ſhort and moreover bewildered by the trouble of my mind for ſo heavy and important a loſs, it is impoſſible but I may have forgot many things which I could wiſh were known; but as for thoſe which I recollect, I will ſend you them with the ſtricteſt regard to truth that is poſſible. For in order to repreſent him thus cruelly ſtopped in his worthy progreſs; to ſhew you his invincible courage in a body broke down and demoliſhed by the furious efforts of pain and death, would, I confeſs, require a much better ſtyle than mine, becauſe, though when he talked of grave and important ſubjects he mentioned them in ſuch a manner that it was difficult to write them down ſo well, yet it ſeemed at this time as if there was an emulation betwixt his thoughts and his words which ſhould do him the laſt ſervice. For ſure I am that I never obſerved him to have ſo many and ſuch fine imaginations, and thoſe uttered with ſo much eloquence as his were all the time of his illneſs. Preſuming, monſeigneur, that you would not miſlike it, I have choſe to bring into my narrative his moſt trivial and common topics, which having been delivered by him at that time, and in the height of ſo great an affliction, are a ſingular evidence of a mind quite at eaſe, tranquil, and ſecure.

On Monday the 9th of Auguſt, 1563, after I was come home from the Palais, I ſent to invite him to dine with me. He returned me for anſwer, with thanks, that he was a little out of order, and that I ſhould do him a pleaſure if I would but ſpend an hour with him before he ſet out for Medor. Soon after I had dined I waited

on him. He was lain down on the bed with his clothes on, and I found his countenance ſtrangely altered. He told me that he had a looſeneſs on him, attended with the gripes, ever ſince the day before when he played with M. d'Eſcars, and wore only a doublet under a ſilk garment; and that often when he caught a cold it was attended with ſuch fits. I thought it proper that he ſhould undertake the journey he had intended, but adviſed him to go no farther that evening than to Germignan, which is but two leagues out of town. I did this the rather, becauſe the place where he lay was cloſe to ſome houſes that were infected with the plague, of which he was ſomewhat afraid, ſince he returned from Perigord and the Agenois, where it raged in all parts; beſides I had formerly myſelf found benefit in ſuch a diſtemper as his was, by riding on horſeback. Accordingly he ſet out, accompanied by his wife and his uncle M. de Bouillonas.

Early the next morning behold one of his domeſtics came to me from Mademoiſelle de la Boetia, to acquaint me that he had been ſeized that night with a violent dyſentery; ſhe ſent for a doctor and an apothecary, and deſired me to come to him, which after dinner I did.

He was overjoyed to ſee me, and when I was taking my leave of him in order to return home, with a promiſe to viſit him again next day, he deſired me, with more affection and importunity than ever he had begged any thing in his life, to be with him as much as poſſible; this touched me a little to the quick. Yet I was actually going away when Mademoiſelle de la Boetia, who had already a foreboding of I know not what calamity, intreated me with tears in her eyes that I would not ſtir from him that night. Accordingly ſhe prevailed on me to ſtay, at which he was very much cheered. Next day I returned home, and on Thurſday I went to ſee him again. His diſtemper was worſe, and his flux of blood, with the gripings, which weakened him very much, increaſed every hour.

On

On the Friday I saw him again, and on Saturday I found him very low-spirited; he then told me that his distemper was of the contagious kind, and moreover, that it was disagreeable and choleric; that he very well knew my temper, and desired me to visit him but now and then, yet as often as I could. After this I did not leave him. Till the the following Sunday he had said nothing to me of what he thought of his being, and we discoursed only about the particular circumstances of his malady, and what the ancient physicians said of it. We had very little talk about public affairs, which I found, from the very first day, he had an aversion to. But on the Sunday he fainted away: and as he came to himself, he said that all things appeared to him in a confusion, and that he had seen nothing but a thick cloud and an obscure mist, in which every thing was confounded and disordered; but that nevertheless all this fit had given him no displeasure. Death, said I then to him, has nothing worse than this: nay, nothing, replied he, so bad.

Having had no manner of sleep since the first attack of his distemper, and growing still worse, notwithstanding all remedies, so that certain draughts were now taken by him which are never ordered but in cases of the last extremity, he began from this time to despair altogether of his recovery, and communicated his thoughts to me. That same day, because he was in good temper, I said to him, that considering the extraordinary affection which I bore to him, it would ill-become me if I did not take care, that as all his actions in health had been very prudent and well weighed, he should continue to act with the same prudence in his sickness; and that if it were God's will that he should be worse, I should be very sorry that for want of advice he should leave any of his domestic affairs unsettled, not only by reason of the damage which his relations might suffer by it, but for the sake of his reputation; which piece of advice he took very kindly at my hands; and after having solved some difficulties which kept him in suspence, he desired me to call his uncle and his wife singly to him, that he might

give them to understand, what he had resolved on as to his will. I told him that would cast them down. No, no, said he, I will comfort them, and give them much better hopes of my recovery than I entertain myself. And then he asked me whether the fainting-fits which he had, did not a little surprise us. That's of no moment, said I to him, these are fits which are common to such distempers. True brother, replied he, it is of no significance, though what you are most afraid of should be the consequence. To you alone, said I, it would be a happy turn, but the hurt would be to me, who should thereby lose the company of so great, so wise, and sure a friend, whose equal I am certain I should never find. It is very possible, he added, that you never may; and I assure you, that what makes me somewhat solicitous for my recovery, and not to hasten to that passage to which I am gone already half way, is the consideration of the loss you will sustain, as well as that poor man and poor woman there (alluding to his uncle and his wife) whom I love entirely, and who, I am sure, will have much difficulty to bear the loss of me; which indeed will be a very great one, both to them and you. I am also concerned for the regret it will be received with by many people, who have hitherto had a love and value for me, and whose conversation verily, if I could help it, I own I should be glad not to lose as yet. And if I go off the stage of this world, I intreat you, brother, as you know them, to give them a testimony of the friendship I retain for them, to the last breath of my life: and moreover, brother, I was not born perhaps to so little purpose, but I have had it in my power to serve the common cause. But be this as it will, I am ready to depart when it shall please God, being very sure that I shall enjoy the ease you have foretold to me. And, as to you, my friend, I know you to be so wise, how much soever it affects you, that you will nevertheless conform patiently and willingly to whatever it shall please his divine Majesty to order concerning me; and I beseech you to take care that the mourning for my departure may not drive

that

that good man and good woman out of the pale of their reaſon. He then aſked me how they behaved already: I told him very well, conſidering the importance of the caſe. I ſuppoſe ſo, ſaid he, now that they have ſtill ſome hopes; but ſhould I once deprive them of any hopes, you will be much perplexed to keep them in temper. In purſuance of this regard for them, he always concealed from them the certain perſuaſion he had of his death, as long as he lived, and earneſtly begged me to behave in the ſame manner. When he ſaw them near him, he affected to look briſk and gay, and fed them with flattering hopes.

I now left him to go and call them. They compoſed their countenances the beſt they could for a while; and after we were ſeated round his bed, we four being all alone, he ſpoke as follows with a ſettled countenance, as it were quite gay: "My uncle and my wife, I aſſure "you upon my credit, that no freſh attack of my diſ- "temper, or miſapprehenſion that I have of my reco- "very, has put it into my head to call you, in order to "apprize you of my intention; for, God be praiſed, I "am very well and full of hopes; but having long been "convinced, both by experience and ſtudy, of the little "ſecurity that is to be placed in the inſtability and in- "conſtancy of human affairs, and even of the uncer- "tainty of that life whereof we are ſo fond, which is "nevertheleſs but ſmoke and a mere nothing; and con- "ſidering alſo, that becauſe I am ſick, I am ſo much the "nearer advanced to the danger of death, I am reſolved "to put my domeſtic affairs in order before I die, after "having firſt taken your advice." And then addreſſing his diſcourſe to his uncle: "My good uncle, ſaid he, "were I at this hour to give you an account of the great "obligations I have to you, I ſhould not know where to "end. It is enough for me that hitherto, whereſoever I "have been, and with whomſoever I have talked, I "have always ſaid that whatever a wiſe, good, and moſt "bountiful father could do for his ſon, all this have you "done for me; both for the care that was neceſſary to

"give

" give me good learning, and when you were pleaſed to " puſh me into public employments; ſo that the whole " courſe of my life has been full of great and praiſe- " worthy offices of your friendſhip towards me: in ſhort, " whatever I have, I hold from you, and acknowledge " that I am obliged for to you, who have been to me a " father indeed; ſo that as the ſon of the family, I have " no power to diſpoſe of any thing, unleſs you are " pleaſed to give me leave." He then was ſilent, and ſtaid till ſighs and ſobs gave his uncle leiſure to anſwer him, that whatever he thought fit would be always very acceptable to him. Having purpoſed at the ſame time to make him his heir, he deſired him to accept of his eſtate.

And then turning his diſcourſe to his wife, " My like- " neſs, ſaid he, (for ſo he often called her on account of " ſome ancient relation betwixt them) as I have been " joined to you by the ſacred tie of marriage, which is " one of the moſt reſpectable and inviolable obliga- " tions which God has laid upon us here below for keep- " ing up human ſociety, I have loved, cheriſhed, and " eſteemed you as far as I was able; and am fully aſ- " ſured that you have returned me a reciprocal affection, " which I cannot ſufficiently acknowledge. I deſire you " to take that ſhare of my goods which I give you, and " to content yourſelf therewith, though I know indeed " that it is very little, compared with your deſerts."

After this, addreſſing himſelf to me, " My brother, " ſaid he, whom I love ſo dearly, and whom I have cho- " ſen out of ſuch a multitude, in order to renew that vir- " tuous and ſincere friendſhip with you, the exerciſe of " which has by the vices of the age been ſo long unknown " to us that there are only ſome old traces left of it in the " memory of antiquity, I beſeech you, as a token of my " affection for you, to accept of the gift of my library " and books; a preſent very ſmall, but given with a good " heart, and which is the fitter for you conſidering you " are a lover of learning. This will ſerve you as a " μνημόσυνον, or a remembrancer of your companion."

Then

Then addreſſing himſelf to all three of us in general, he bleſſed God that in a caſe of ſuch extremity he was accompanied by all thoſe that were the deareſt to him in the world, and ſaid, he thought it a very goodly ſight to ſee four perſons aſſembled together ſo well agreed, and united in friendſhip, not doubting, he ſaid, that we all loved one another unanimouſly, each one for the ſake of the others. And after having recommended us to one another, he proceeded thus: having now ſettled my temporal affairs, I muſt alſo think of my ſpirituals. "I "am a chriſtian; I am a catholic; ſuch I have lived and "ſuch I am determined to die. Send for a prieſt to come "to me, for I am not willing to be deficient in this laſt "duty of a chriſtian."

With this particular he ended his diſcourſe, which he had carried on with ſuch a ſteady countenance, ſuch a ſtrength of language and voice, that whereas when I entered his chamber, I found him weak, mighty ſlow in the utterance of his words, his pulſe very low, as if he had a lingering fever, and tending to death, his countenance quite pale and wan; he ſeemed now, as if it had been by a miracle, to have reſumed freſh vigour, with a more ruddy complexion and a ſtronger pulſe, ſo that I made him feel mine in order to compare them together. At that inſtant my heart was ſo ſunk that I could ſcarce anſwer him a word. But two or three hours after, in order to keep up his noble courage, and alſo becauſe I wiſhed, from the tender concern I had all my life long for his honour and glory, that there were more witneſſes of ſo many ſtrong proofs of his magnanimity, by having a larger company in his chamber, I ſaid to him, that I bluſhed for ſhame to think that my courage failed me in the hearing of what he, who was ſo great a ſufferer, had the courage to tell me; that hitherto I had thought, that God ſcarce ever gave us ſo great an advantage over human incidents, and could hardly believe what I had read of it in ſome hiſtories; but that having now ſeen ſuch a proof of it, I praiſed God that I had found it in a perſon, by whom I was ſo much beloved, and who was

to

to me so dear, and that this would serve me as an example to act the same part in my turn.

He interrupted me by desiring I would behave so, and demonstrate by the effect, that the conversation we had had in the time of our health, was not only oral but deeply engraved on our hearts, and ready to be put in execution upon the first occasion that offered; adding, that this was the true practice of our studies, and of philosophy. Then taking me by the hand, "My brother, "my friend, said he, I assure thee I have done many "things, I think, in my life, with as much pain and "difficulty as I do this. And when all is said and done, "it is a long while ago since I was prepared for it, and "that I had got all my lesson by heart. But is it not "enough to have lived to my age? I was just entering into "my thirty-third year. By God's grace all my days hitherto have been healthy and happy; but through the inconstancy of human affairs they could not continue so "longer. It was now time to launch into serious affairs, "and to expect to meet with a thousand unpleasant "scenes, as particularly the inconveniencies of old age, "of which I am by this means quit: and besides, it is "probable that I have lived to this hour with more innocence and less ill-nature than I should have done, if "God had permitted me to live till my head had been "filled with the care of getting wealth and ease. As for "my part, I am certain that I am going to God, and "the seat of the blessed." But now, because my countenance betrayed some uneasiness at these words of his, "What, brother, said he, would you possess me with "fear? if I had any terror upon me, whose business "should it be to take it off, but yours?"

The notary, who was sent for to receive his last will and testament, coming in the evening, I made him commit it to writing, and then went to ask him whether he was not willing to sign it: "Not sign it? said he, I will "sign it with my own hand. But I wish brother that they "had given me more time, for I find myself extremely "weary, and so weak that I am in a manner spent." I was going

going to change the discourse, but he recovered himself on a sudden, and said to me, that he had not very long to live, and he desired of me to know whether the notary wrote a swift hand, for he should scarce make any pause in dictating. I called the notary to him, and he dictated his will to him on the spot, so fast that he had much ado to keep pace with him. When had made an end, he desired me to read it to him, and said to me: "See, "what it is to take care of that fine thing our riches." *Sunt hæc quæ hominibus vocantur bona*; "these are the things "that men call good." After the will was signed, his chamber being full of people, he asked me if talking would do him any harm; I said no, provided he spoke softly.

Then he called Mademoiselle de Saintquentin, his niece, to him, and spoke to her thus. "My dear niece, "I think that ever since I have known you, I have seen "the rays of a very good nature sparkle in your counte-"nance; but these last offices which you perform with "so much affection and diligence in my present neces-"sity, give me very great hopes of you, and really I am "obliged to you, and thank you, most affectionately. "Now, in order to discharge my conscience, I advise "you in the first place to devote yourself to God, for "this is no doubt, the principal part of your duty, and "that without which no other action of ours can be "either good or goodly; and when such devotion is "hearty, it necessarily draws after it all other virtuous "actions. Next to God, you must love and honour "your father and your mother, even your mother my "sister, whom I take to be one of the best and most "prudent women in the world; and desire you to "regulate your life by her example. Do not suffer "yourself to be drawn aside by pleasures. Avoid as "a pestilence those silly familiarities with which you see "the women sometimes indulge the men; for though "there may be no harm in them at first, yet by little "and little they corrupt the mind, and lead it to a "thoughtless state, and from thence to the abominable

"sink

" ſink of vice. Believe me, the ſureſt protection of a " young woman's chaſtity is gravity. I deſire you, " (and expect that you will remember me by frequently " recollecting the friendſhips I have ſhewed you) not to " complain and grieve yourſelf for the loſs of me; and, " as far as is in my power, I lay all my friends under the " ſame prohibition, ſince it would look as if they en- " vied the happineſs of which, by the favour of " death, I ſhall ſoon ſee myſelf in poſſeſſion; and aſ- " ſure yourſelf, my girl, that if God was now to indulge " me with the choice, whether of living my life over " again, or of finiſhing the journey which I have begun, " I ſhould be actually at a loſs which to chuſe. My " dear niece, adieu."

He then called to Mademoiſelle d' Arſat, his daughter-in-law, and ſaid to her, " My daughter, you have no " great need of admonitions from me, as you have a " mother whom I have found ſo prudent, ſo very con- " formable to my temper and inclinations, that ſhe never " once offended me. You will be very well inſtructed " by ſuch a tutoreſs; and do not think it ſtrange if I, " who am not related to you by blood, have a care and " anxiety for you. For ſince you are the daughter of a " perſon ſo near to me in alliance, it is impoſſible but I " muſt alſo be touched with whatever concerns you. " At the ſame time I have ever taken as much care of " the affairs of M. d' Arſat your brother, as if they were " my own. You have enough both of wealth and beauty. " You are a gentlewoman of a good family. You have " nothing more to do than to grace them both with the " talents of the mind, which I deſire you would not fail " of doing. I do not forbid you that vice which is ſo " deteſtable in women; for I am not willing ſo much as " to think you can entertain a favourable thought of it, " nay, I am of opinion that you abhor the very name of " it. My daughter in-law, farewell."

Though the whole chamber was full of weeping and wailing, it did not interrupt the thread of his diſcourſes, which were pretty long. But after he had made an end,

he

he ordered every one to quit his room except his garrison, which was the name he gave to his maid-servants. And then calling to my brother de Beauregard, he said to him: "M. de Beauregard, I thank you very heartily for the "pains which you take for me. I have something very "much at heart, which I long to tell you, and will there- "fore with your leave discover it to you." And being encouraged by my brother, he proceeded thus: "I swear "to you that of all who have set about the reformation "of the church, I never thought there was any one man "that entered upon it with better zeal and a more en- "tire, sincere, and undisguised affection than you. And "I verily believe, you was excited to it merely by the "vices of our prelates, who undoubtedly stand in need "of great amendment, and by certain imperfections, "that have in a course of time crept into our church. "I do not wish at this juncture to dissuade you from it, "as I do not willingly desire any body to do any thing "whatsoever against his conscience. But I would fain "caution you, that in regard to the good reputation "which your family has acquired by their perpetual "agreement, a family than which not one in the world "is dearer to me, (good God, where is such another fa- "mily as this, which never did an action unbecoming an "honest man!) in regard to the will of your father, "that good father to whom you are so much obliged, "and of your uncle, and for the sake of your brethren, "you would avoid coming to extremities; be not so "sharp and so violent; accommodate yourself to them. "Make no separate combination nor party; but unite "yourselves together. You see what ruin these dissen- "sions have brought upon this kingdom, and I can assure "you that they will be attended with still greater mischiefs: "and as you are not deficient either in wisdom or good- "ness, be cautious of bringing your family into these "inconveniencies, for fear they should deprive it of the "honour and happiness which it has enjoyed to this "hour. Take what I say to you, sir, in good part, "and for a sure testimony of the friendship which I bear

"to

" to you. For with this view I hitherto reserved my " mention of it to you; and perhaps the condition in " which you now see me speaking it will give my words " more weight and authority with you." My brother thanked him very much.

On the Monday morning he was so bad that he quitted all hopes of life; insomuch that the very next time he saw me, he in a very deplorable tone said: " Brother, " have you no pity for the many torments that I suffer? " Don't you now see, that all the relief you give me " serves only to prolong my pain?" Soon after this he fainted; so that we began to give him over for dead: at length by the power of vinegar and wine he was revived. But he did not live long after, and hearing us lament about him, he said: " My God, who is it torments me so? " Why was I robbed of that profound and pleasant rest " which I had? pray leave me to myself." And then hearing me, he said, " And you too, brother, are not willing neither that I should be cured. Oh, what ease do you de- " prive me of!" At last being a little more come to himself, he desired a little wine, and liking it well, said to me, it was the best liquor in the world." " No surely, said I, " for argument sake, water is the best. Yes, without doubt, " replied he, water is an excellent thing, ὕδωρ ἄριζον." His extreme parts even to his face were now become as cold as clay, attended with a death-sweat, which ran down all his body, and he had scarce any sign of a pulse left. This morning he confessed to his priest, who did not bring all the necessaries with him, and therefore could not celebrate the mass. But on Tuesday morning M. de la Boetia sent for him to assist him as he said, in the performance of the last duty of a christian. Consequently he heard mass and received the sacrament. And when the priest was taking leave of him, he said: " My spiritual " father, I humbly beseech it of you, and those who are " under your charge, to pray to God for me, that if it " be ordered in the most sacred rolls of the decrees of " God that I should now end my days, that he would " take pity on my soul, and forgive me my sins, which

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" are without number, as it is not poſſible for ſo vile " and baſe a creature as I am, to perform the com- " mands of ſo high and mighty a Maſter; or if it " ſeemeth good to him, that I ſhould tarry longer in " this world, beg of him to put a ſpeedy period to the " agonies which I ſuffer; and that he would be ſo gra- " cious to me, as to guide my ſteps hereafter in the path " of his holy will, and to make me better than I have " been." At this period he ſtopped a little to take breath, and ſeeing that the prieſt was going away, he recalled him, and ſaid to him: " I am willing to de- " clare this alſo in your preſence: I proteſt, that as I " have been baptiſed and have lived, ſo I am willing to " die, in the faith and religion which Moſes firſt plant- " ed in Egypt, which the patriarchs received afterwards " in Judæa, and which in the progreſs of time has been " handed down to us in France." It ſeemed as if he would fain have ſpoke a little more if he had been able to have held out; but he concluded with deſiring his uncle and me to pray to God for him; this being, he ſaid, the beſt office that Chriſtians can perform for one another. In ſpeaking he happened to uncover his ſhoulder, and deſired his uncle to cover it again, though he had a valet nearer to him: and then looking upon me, he ſaid, *Ingenui eſt, cui multum debeas, ei plurimum velle debere*; " it is the quality of an ingenuous mind to deſire to " be under ſtill greater obligation to the perſon whom we " are much obliged to already." In the afternoon M. de Belot came to viſit him, and taking him by the hand, ſaid to him, " My friend, I came hither, ſir, on purpoſe " to pay my debt, but I have found a worthy creditor, " who has forgiven it me." A little after, ſtarting ſuddenly out of a doze, he ſaid, " Well, well, come when " it will, I wait for it with ſerenity and pleaſure." Words which he repeated two or three times in his illneſs. Afterwards as they were forcing open his mouth to take a draught, he ſaid, turning himſelf to M. de Belot, *An vivere tanti eſt?* " Is life worth all this ado?" In the evening death begun indeed at night to ſtrike him with its arrows, and as I was at ſupper, he ſent for me, being nothing now but ſkin and bones, or as he called himſelf,

Non homo ſed ſpecies hominis; "not a man but of the "human race." And he ſaid to me with the utmoſt ſtruggles: "My brother and friend, God grant that I "may ſee the imaginations that I have juſt been enter- "tained with, realiſed." After he had ſtopt a while, and laboured hard with the deepeſt ſighs for utterance, for then the tongue was beginning plainly to deny him its laſt office. I ſaid, "What were thoſe ideas, bro- "ther?" "Great," ſaid he, "very great." "It never "happened before, I added, that I had not the honour "of being made acquainted with all your ideas; will "you not let me ſtill enjoy that confidence?" "Yes, "ſurely, brother," ſaid he, "but it is not in my power "to diſcover them; they are wonderful, infinite, and "unſpeakable." There he ſtopped, for he could pro- ceed no farther; inſomuch, that a little before he would fain have talked to his wife, when he ſaid to her, with the moſt chearful countenance he could put on, that he had ſomething to tell her; and he ſeemed to ſtrive to ſpeak, but his ſpirits failing, he called for a little wine to raiſe them, but it ſignified nothing; for he fainted away on a ſudden, and for a good while loſt his ſight. Being now juſt on the confines of death, and hearing the lamentations of his wife, he called her, and ſpoke thus to her: "My image, you torment yourſelf before "the time; won't you pity me? Take courage. Ve- "rily I am more in pain for what I ſee you ſuffer than "what I feel myſelf, and with reaſon, becauſe as for "the evils which we feel of our own, it is not, properly "ſpeaking, we who feel them, but certain ſenſes which "God has planted in us; and, what we feel for others, "we feel by a certain judgment and faculty of reaſon- "ing. But I ſee I am going." This he ſaid becauſe his ſpirits failed him. Now being afraid that he had frighted his wife, he recovered himſelf and ſaid: "I "find myſelf inclined to ſleep: good night, wife, go "your ways." This was the laſt leave he took of her. After ſhe was gone, "Brother," ſaid he to me, "keep "cloſe by me, if you pleaſe;" and then either feeling the darts of death come thicker and ſharper, or elſe the force of ſome hot medicine which they had made him

ſwal-

ſwallow, he ſpoke with a ſtronger and more audible voice, and turned himſelf in bed with perfect violence, ſo that all the company began to have ſome hopes, becauſe hitherto he had been ſo very weak that we deſpaired of him. Then amongſt other things he begged me again and again, with the greateſt affection, to make room for him; ſo that I was afraid he was delirious. Moreover, when I had gently remonſtrated to him that he was overpowered by his diſtemper, and that theſe were not the words of a man in his right ſenſes; he did not ſeem to be convinced, but repeated it ſtill more ſtrongly. "Bro- "ther, brother, what, won't you give me room?" inſomuch that he forced me to convince him by reaſon, and to ſay to him, that ſince he breathed and talked he had by conſequence his place. "Yes, yes," ſaid he, "but "that is not what I want; and beſides, ſay what you will, "I have no longer a being." "God will give you a "better very ſoon," ſaid I. "Would to God, brother," ſaid he, "I was there now; I have longed to be gone "theſe three days paſt." In this diſtreſſed ſtate he often called to me, in order, for moſt part, to know whether I was near him. At length he inclined a little to reſt, which confirmed us ſtill more in our good hopes; ſo that I went out of his chamber to congratulate thereupon with Mademoiſelle de la Boetia; but about an hour after naming me once or twice, and then fetching a deep ſigh, he gave up the ghoſt about three o'clock on Wedneſday morning, the 18th of Auguſt 1563, aged 32 years 9 months and 17 days.

LETTER VI.†

To Monſeigneur Monſeigneur DE MONTAIGNE.

MONSEIGNEUR,

IN obedience to your commands laſt year at your houſe at Montaigne, I have with my own hands put

† I met with this Letter by way of Dedication of Raymond Sebonde's Natural Theology, tranſlated into French by Michael Seigneur de Montaigne, knight of the king's order, and gentleman in ordinary of his privy-chamber. Printed at Roan by John de la Mere, an. 1641.

that great Spaniſh divine and philoſopher Raymond de Sebonde into a French dreſs, and have as much as lay in my power ſtripped him of that rough mien and unpolite aſpect, which he firſt appeared in to you; ſo that in my opinion he is comely and complaiſant enough to appear in the beſt of company. It is poſſible that ſome delicate curious readers may perceive, that he has a little of the Gaſcogne turn and biaſs; but they may be the more aſhamed of their own negligence, in ſuffering a perſon quite a novice and a learner to get the ſtart of them in this work. Now, Monſeigneur, it is but reaſon that it ſhould be publiſhed to the world, and have the credit of your name, becauſe what amendment and reformation it has is all owing to you. Yet I plainly perceive, that if you ſhould pleaſe to ſettle accompts with him, you will be very much his debtor, ſince in exchange for his excellent and moſt religious diſcourſes, of his ſublime, and as it were divine conceptions, it will appear that you have only brought him words and language, a merchandize ſo mean and vulgar, that he who has the greateſt ſtock of it is peradventure the worſe for it.

Monſeigneur, I beg God to grant you a long and happy life.

Your moſt humble and moſt obedient ſon,

MICHAEL DE MONTAIGNE.

N. B. *Mr. Coſte has inſerted a letter before this, which is addreſſed to Mademoiſelle de Paumier, but it is only a ſhort one, of mere compliment.*

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A COMPLETE

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OF THE MOST

REMARKABLE MATTERS

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FINIS.